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THE POETICAL WORKS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY VOLUME III.

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SONNET: TO THE NILE.



ONTH after month the gathered rains descend
Drenching yon secret Æthiopian dells,
And from the desert's ice-girt pinnacles,
Where Frost and Heat in strange embraces blend
On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend.
Girt there with blasts and meteors, Tempest dwells
By Nile's aërial urn, with rapid spells
Urging those waters to their mighty end.
O'er Egypt's land of Memory floods are level,
And they are thine, O Nile, and well thou knowest
That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil
And fruits and poisons, spring where'er thou flowest.
Beware, O Man, for knowledge must to thee
Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES.



ISTEN, listen, Mary mine,
To the whisper of the Apennine,
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
Or like the sea on a northern shore,
Heard in its raging ebb and flow
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and grey,
Which between the earth and sky doth lay;
But when night comes, a chaos dread
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm

THE PAST.



ILT thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's swee
bowers,
Heaping over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould?
Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

Forget the dead, the past? O yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,

And with ghastly whispers tell
That joy, once lost, is pain.

ON A FADED VIOLET.



HE odour from the flower is gone,
Which like thy kisses breathed on me;
The colour from the flower is flown,
Which glowed of thee and only thee!

A shrivelled, lifeless, vacant form,
It lies on my abandoned breast,
And mocks the heart which yet is warm,
With cold and silent rest.

I weep, ... my tears revive it not!
I sigh, ... it breathes no more on me;
Its mute and uncomplaining lot
Is such as mine should be.

INVOCATION TO MISERY.



OME, be happy! ... sit by me,
Shadow-vested Misery:
Coy, unwilling, silent bride,
Mourning in thy robe of pride,
Desolation ... deified!
Come, be happy! ... sit near me:
Sad as I may seem to thee,
I am happier far than thou,

Invocation to Misery

Lady, whose imperial brow
Is endiademed with woe.

Misery! we have known each other,
Like a sister and a brother
Living in the same lone home,
Many years ... we must live some
Hours or ages yet to come.

'Tis an evil lot, and yet
Let us make the best of it;
If love lives when pleasure dies,
We will love, till in our eyes
This heart's Hell seem Paradise.

Come, be happy! ... lie thee down
On the fresh grass newly mown,
Where the grasshopper doth sing
Merrily ... one joyous thing
In a world of sorrowing!

There our tent shall be the willow,
And thine arm shall be my pillow;
Sounds and odours sorrowful
Because they once were sweet, shall lull
Us to slumber, deep and dull.

Ha! thy frozen pulses flutter
With a love thou darest not utter.
Thou art murmuring ... thou art weeping ...

Is thine icy bosom leaping
While my burning heart lies sleeping?

Kiss me;...oh! thy lips are cold:
Round my neck thine arms enfold...
They are soft, but chill and dead;
And thy tears upon my head
Burn like points of frozen lead.

Hasten to the bridal bed...
Underneath the grave 'tis spread;
In darkness may our love be hid,
Oblivion be our coverlid...
We may rest, and none forbid.

Clasp me, till our hearts be grown
Like two shadows into one;
Till this dreadful transport may
Like a vapour fade away,
In the sleep that lasts alway.

We may dream, in that long sleep,
That we are not those who weep;
E'en as Pleasure dreams of thee,
Life-deserting Misery,
Thou mayst dream of her with me.

Let us laugh, and make our mirth,
At the shadows of the earth,
As dogs bay the moonlight clouds,

Invocation to Misery

Invocation to Misery

Which, like spectres wrapt in shrouds,
Pass o'er night in multitudes.

All the wide world, beside us
Show like multitudinous
Puppets passing from a scene;
What but mockery can they mean,
Where I am ... where thou hast been?

STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES.

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might,
The breath of the moist earth is light,
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown;
I sit upon the sands alone,
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned,
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround,
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Stanzas written in Dejection

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last mónotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament, for I am one
Whom men love not, and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet

SONNET.

LIFT not the painted veil which those who live
Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread, behind, lurk Fear
And Hope, twin destinies; who ever weave
Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.
I knew one who had lifted it, he sought,
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,
But found them not, alas! nor was there aught
The world contains, the which he could approve.
Through the unheeding many he did move,
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot
Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

LINES WRITTEN DURING THE CASTLEREAGH ADMINISTRATION.

CORPSES are cold in the tomb;
Stones on the pavement are dumb;
Abortions are dead in the womb,
And their mothers look pale, like the white shore
Of Albion, free no more.

Her sons are as stones in the way;
They are masses of senseless clay;

They are trodden, and move not away,
The abortion with which she travaileth
Is Liberty, smitten to death.

Then trample and dance, thou Oppressor!
For thy victim is no redresser;
Thou art sole lord and possessor
Of her corpses, and clods, and abortions; they pave
Thy path to the grave.

Hearest thou the festival din
Of Death and Destruction and Sin,
And Wealth crying, Havock! within?
'Tis the Bacchanal triumph that makes Truth
dumb,
Thine Epithalamium.

Ay, marry thy ghastly wife!
Let Fear and Disquiet and Strife
Spread thy couch in the chamber of Life!
Marry Ruin, thou Tyrant! and Hell be thy guide
To the bed of thy bride!

SONG: TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND.

MEN of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?
Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,

To the Men of England

Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat ... nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed, ... but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth, ... let no impostor heap;
Weave robes, ... let not the idle wear;
Forge arms, ... in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells;
In halls ye deck, another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,

And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulchre.

TO SIDMOUTH & CASTLEREAGH.



S from an ancestral oak
Two empty ravens sound their clarion,
Yell by yell, and croak by croak,
When they scent the noonday smoke
Of fresh human carrion:

As two gibbering night-birds flit
From their bowers of deadly yew
Through the night to frighten it,
When the moon is in a fit,
And the stars are none, or few:

As a shark and dog-fish wait,
Under an Atlantic isle,
For the negro-ship, whose freight
Is the theme of their debate,
Wrinkling their red gills the while,

Are ye, two vultures sick for battle,
Two scorpions under one wet stone,
Two bloodless wolves whose dry throats rattle,
Two crows perched on the murrained cattle,
Two vipers tangled into one.

ENGLAND IN 1819.



N old, mad, blind, despised and dying king;
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn, mud from a muddy spring;
Rulers, who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow;
A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field;
An army which liberticide and prey
Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield
Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;
Religion Christless, Godless, a book sealed;
A Senate, ... Time's worst statute unrepealed,
Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may
Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

NATIONAL ANTHEM.



OD prosper, speed, and save,
God raise from England's grave
Her murdered Queen!
Pave with swift victory
The steps of Liberty,
Whom Britons own to be
Immortal Queen.

See, she comes throned on high,
On swift Eternity!

National Anthem

God save the Queen!
Millions on millions wait
Firm, rapid, and elate,
On her majestic state!
God save the Queen!

She is thine own pure soul
Moulding the mighty whole,
God save the Queen!
She is thine own deep love
Rained down from heaven above,
Wherever she rest or move,
God save our Queen!

Wilder her enemies
In their own dark disguise,
God save our Queen!
All earthly things that dare
Her sacred name to bear,
Strip them, as kings are, bare;
God save the Queen!

Be her eternal throne
Built in our hearts alone,
God save the Queen!
Let the oppressor hold
Canopied seats of gold;
She sits enthroned of old
O'er our hearts Queen.

National Anthem

Lips touched by seraphim
Breathe out the choral hymn, ...
God save the Queen!
Sweet as if angels sang,
Loud as that trumpet's clang,
Wakening the world's dead gang, ...
God save the Queen!

ODE TO HEAVEN.

Chorus of Spirits.

1st Spirit



ALACE-ROOF of cloudless nights!
Paradise of golden lights!
Deep, immeasurable, vast,
Which art now, & which wert then,
Of the present and the past,
Of the eternal where and when,
Presence-chamber, temple, home,
Ever-canopying dome
Of acts and ages yet to come!

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
Earth, and all earth's company;
Living globes which ever throng
Thy deep chasms and wildernesses;
And green worlds that glide along;
And swift stars with flashing tresses;
And icy moons most cold and bright,
And mighty suns beyond the night,
Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,
Heaven! for thou art the abode
Of that power which is the glass
Wherein man his nature sees.
Generations as they pass
Worship thee with bended knees.
Their unremaining gods and they
Like a river roll away:
Thou remainest such alway.

2nd Spirit Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
Round which its young fancies clamber,
Like weak insects in a cave,
Lighted up by stalactites;
But the portal of the grave,
Where a world of new delights
Will make thy best glories seem
But a dim and noonday gleam
From the shadow of a dream!

3rd Spirit Peace! the abyss is wreathed with scorn
At your presumption, atom-born!
What is heaven? and what are ye
Who its brief expanse inherit?
What are suns and spheres which flee
With the instinct of that spirit
Of which ye are but a part?
Drops which Nature's mighty heart
Drives through thinnest veins. Depart!

Ode to Heaven

What is heaven? a globe of dew,
Filling in the morning new
Some eyed flower whose young leaves waken
On an unimagined world:
Constellated suns unshaken,
Orbits measureless, are furled
In that frail and fading sphere,
With ten millions gathered there,
To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

AN EXHORTATION.

CHAMELEONS feed on light and air:
Poets' food is love and fame:
If in this wide world of care
Poets could but find the same
With as little toil as they,
Would they ever change their hue
As the light chameleons do,
Suiting it to every ray
Twenty times a day?

Poets are on this cold earth,
As chameleons might be,
Hidden from their early birth
In a cave beneath the sea;
Where light is, chameleons change:
Where love is not, poets do;
Fame is love disguised: if few

Find either, never think it strange
That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
A poet's free and heavenly mind:
If bright chameleons should devour
Any food but beams and wind,
They would grow as earthly soon
As their brother lizards are.
Children of a sunnier star,
Spirits from beyond the moon,
O, refuse the boon!

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.



WILD West Wind, thou breath
of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen pre-
sence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an
enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O, thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill

(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O, hear!

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: O, hear!

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O, hear!

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

Ode to the West Wind

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

AN ODE: WRITTEN OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD RECOVERED THEIR LIBERTY.



RISE, arise, arise!
There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread!
Be your wounds like eyes
To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.

What other grief were it just to pay?
Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they;
Who said they were slain on the battle-day?

Awaken, awaken, awaken!
The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes;
Be the cold chains shaken
To the dust where your kindred repose, repose:
Their bones in the grave will start and move,
When they hear the voices of those they love,
Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner!
When Freedom is riding to conquest by:
Though the slaves that fan her
Be Famine and Toil, giving sigh for sigh.
And ye who attend her imperial car,
Lift not your hands in the banded war
But in her defence whose children ye are.

Glory, glory, glory,
To those who have greatly suffered and done!
Never name in story
Was greater than that which ye shall have won.
Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,
Whose revenge, pride, and power, they have overthrown:
Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow
With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine:

An Ode: Written October, 1819

Hide the blood-stains now
With hues which sweet nature has made divine:
Green strength, azure hope, and eternity:
But let not the pansy among them be;
Ye were injured, and that means memory.

ON THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI IN THE FLORENTINE GALLERY



T lieth, gazing on the midnight sky
Upon the cloudy mountain peak supine;
Below, far lands are seen tremblingly;
Its horror and its beauty are divine.
Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie.
Loveliness like a shadow, from which shine,
Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,
The agonies of anguish and of death.

Yet it is less the horror than the grace
Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone,
Whereon the lineaments of that dead face
Are graven, till the characters be grown
Into itself, and thought no more can trace;
'Tis the melodious hue of beauty thrown
Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain,
Which humanize and harmonize the strain.

And from its head as from one body grow,
As grass out of a watery rock,
Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow

And their long tangles in each other lock,
And with unending involutions show
Their mailèd radiance, as it were to mock
The torture and the death within, and saw
The solid air with many a ragged jaw.

And, from a stone beside, a poisonous eft
Peeps idly into those Gorgonian eyes;
Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft
Of sense, has flitted with a mad surprise
Out of the cave this hideous light had cleft,
And he comes hastening like a moth that hies
After a taper; and the midnight sky
Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror;
For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare
Kindled by that inextricable error,
Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air
Become a and ever-shifting mirror
Of all the beauty and the terror there...
A woman's countenance, with serpent locks,
Gazing in death on heaven from those wet rocks.

THE INDIAN SERENADE.



ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet

The Indian Serenade

Hath led me... who knows how?
To thy chamber window, Sweet!

The wandering airs, they faint
On the dark, the silent stream;
The Champak's odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart;
As I must die on thine,
O! belovèd as thou art!

Oh, lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;
Oh! press it to thine own again,
Where it will break at last.

TO SOPHIA.

THOU art fair, and few are fairer
Of the nymphs of earth or ocean;
They are robes that fit the wearer..
Those soft limbs of thine, whose motion
Ever falls and shifts and glances
As the life within them dances.

Thy deep eyes, a double Planet,
Gaze the wisest into madness
With soft clear fire; the winds that fan it
Are those thoughts of tender gladness
Which, like zephyrs on the billow,
Make thy gentle soul their pillow.

If, whatever face thou paintest
In those eyes, grows pale with pleasure,
If the fainting soul is faintest
When it hears thy harp's wild measure,
Wonder not that when thou speakest
Of the weak my heart is weakest.

As dew beneath the wind of morning,
As the sea which whirlwinds waken,
As the birds at thunder's warning,
As aught mute yet deeply shaken,
As one who feels an unseen spirit,
Is my heart when thine is near it.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY.

THE fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle.
Why not I with thine?

Love's Philosophy

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

Part I.

A SENSITIVE Plant
in a garden grew,
And the young winds
fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like
leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath
the kisses of night.
And the Spring arose on
the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair, and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addrest,
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Mænad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was prankt, under boughs of embowering blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees, ...

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells,
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flowrets which, drooping as day drooped too,
Fell into pavilions white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glowworm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it)

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,

Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear,
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant, which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;
Radiance and odour are not its dower;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the beautiful!

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The plumèd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream;

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from heaven above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, tho' less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drowned
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;
Whose waves never mark, tho' they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness;

(Only over head the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant.)

The Sensitive Plant. Part I.

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest
Upgathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of night.

Part II.

THERE was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling grace
Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even;
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth!

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake,

As if yet around her he lingering were,
Tho' the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed;
You might hear, by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers thro' all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and ozier-bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,

The Sensitive Plant.

She bore in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,

Part II.

In a basket, of grasses and wild flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris
Whose path is the lightning's, & soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of summer tide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown ... she died!

Part III.

THREE days the flowers of the garden fair,
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,
Or the waves of Baiæ, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chaunt,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift summer into the autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf by leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and grey, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind past;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless network of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould,
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated!

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill:
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noonday
Unseen; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore,
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came: the wind was his whip:
One choppy finger was on his lip:
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne,
By the tenfold blasts of the arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want:
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain,
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again,
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When Winter had gone and Spring came back,
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks,
and darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

WHETHER the Sensitive Plant, or
that
Which within its boughs like a spirit
sat,
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance and strife,

Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant, if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never past away:
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

A VISION OF THE SEA.

IS the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from heaven,
She sees the black trunks of the waterspouts spin,

And bend, as if heaven was ruining in,
Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass
As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass
To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
And the waves and the thunders, made silent around,
Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed
Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep
Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
Dim mirrors of ruin, hang gleaming about;
While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,
With splendour and terror the black ship environ,
Or, like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire,
In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,
While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has past.
The intense thunder-balls which are raining from heaven
Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and riven.

The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dull hulk
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up from the waters below,
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose,
In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;)
Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank?
Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep,
Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins, the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast

Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
And the sharks & the dogfish their grave-clothes unbound,
And were glutted like Jews with this manna rained down
From God on their wilderness. One after one
The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
But seven remained. Six the thunder has smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck
An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck.
No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee,
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder
Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye;
Whilst its mother's is lustreless. "Smile not, my child,
But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,

So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!
Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed,
Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread!
Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,
That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?
What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?
To be after life what we have been before?
Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes,
Those lips, and that hair, all that smiling disguise
Thou yet wearest, sweet spirit, which I, day by day,
Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?" Lo! the ship
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;
The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them, hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,
Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry
Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane:
The hurricane came from the west, and past on
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,
Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form

Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,
Between ocean and heaven, like an ocean, past,
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
Which, based on the sea and to heaven upcurled,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain,
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has past,
Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;
They are scattered like foam on the torrent; and where
The wind has burst out from the chasm, from the air
Of clear morning, the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.
And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of cloud are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,
Lulled by the motion and murmurings
And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea,
And overhead glorious, but dreadful to see,
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love,
Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide

Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with heaven's azure smile,
The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with sunbows; the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness;
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins
Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash
As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams
And hissings, crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean-streams,
Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fin-wingèd tomb of the victor. The other
Is winning his way from the fate of his brother,
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel, the brine foams. At the stern
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on

To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,
'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
With her left hand she grasps it impetuously,
With her right hand she sustains her fair infant.
Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! her child
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst.....

THE CLOUD.

I BRING fresh showers for the
thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves
when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

The Cloud

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits,
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love,

And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanos are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,

When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK.



AIL to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest

Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever
singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there;

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is
overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glowworm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,

Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy
wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth
surpass:

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden
want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of
pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures

That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

ODE TO LIBERTY.



GLORIOUS people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations: Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
And in the rapid plumes of song
Clothed itself, sublime and strong;
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,
Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;
Till from its station in the heaven of fame
The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame

Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:
The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
Into the depths of heaven. The dædal earth,
That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:
But this divinest universe
Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not: but power from worst producing worse,
The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
And there was war among them, and despair
Within them, raging without truce or terms:
The bosom of their violated nurse
Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on worms,
And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
His generations under the pavilion
Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
Temple and prison, to many a swarming million,
Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.
This human living multitude
Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,

Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
Hung Tyranny; beneath, sate deified
The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;
Into the shadow of her pinions wide
Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and blood,
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
Of favouring heaven: from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
On the unapprehensive wild
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,
Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Ægean main

Athens arose; a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
Its portals are inhabited

By thunder-zonèd winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sunfire garlanded,
A divine work! Athens diviner yet
Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
Peopled with forms that mock the eternal dead
In marble immortality, that hill
Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
Immovably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
With an earth-awakening blast
Through the caverns of the past;
Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:
A wingèd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
Which soars where Expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
One sun illumines heaven; one spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmean Mænad,
She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
From that Elysian food was yet unweanèd;

And many a deed of terrible uprightness
By thy sweet love was sanctified;
And in thy smile, and by thy side,
Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
And gold profaned thy Capitolian throne,
Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingèd lightness,
The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone
Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus sighed
Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
Or utmost islet inaccessible,
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
To talk in echoes sad and stern,
Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?
For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks
Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou?
And then the shadow of thy coming fell

On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow:
And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
Arose in sacred Italy,
Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned majesty;
That multitudinous anarchy did sweep
And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep
Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
With divine wand traced on our earthly home
Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting dome.

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,
Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingèd Error,
As light may pierce the clouds when they dissever
In the calm regions of the orient day!
Luther caught thy wakening glance,
Like lightning, from his leaden lance
Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen,
In songs whose music cannot pass away,
Though it must flow for ever: not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

The eager hours and unreluctant years
As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, Liberty! Indignation
Answered Pity from her cave;
Death grew pale within the grave,
And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
When, like heaven's sun girt by the exhalation
Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

Thou heaven of earth! what spells could pall
thee then,
In ominous eclipse? a thousand years,
Bred from the slime of deep oppression's den,
Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away;
How like Bacchanals of blood
Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred
brood!
When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers,
Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers

Of serene heaven. He, by the past pursued,
Rests with those dead but unforgotten hours,
Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers.

England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?
Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold
Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder;
O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle
From Pithecusa to Pelorus
Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:
They cry, Be dim; ye lamps of heaven suspended o'er us.
Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel,
Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
Twins of a single destiny! appeal
To the eternal years enthroned before us
In the dim West; impress us from a seal,
All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal.

Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead,
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;
Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
King-deluded Germany,
His dead spirit lives in thee.

Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!
And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness!
Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
Where desolation clothed with loveliness
Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

O, that the free would stamp the impious name
Of King into the dust! or write it there,
So that this blot upon the page of fame
Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
Erases, and the flat sands close behind!
Ye the oracle have heard:
Lift the victory-flashing sword,
And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
Into a mass, irrefragably firm,
The axes and the rods which awe mankind;
The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm
Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred;
Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
To set thine armèd heel on this reluctant worm.

O, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
That the pale name of Priest might shrink and dwindle

Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;
Till human thoughts might kneel alone,
Each before the judgment-throne
Of its own aweless soul, or of the power unknown!
Oh, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
From a white lake blot heaven's blue portraiture,
Were stripped of their thin masks and various hue
And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
Till in the nakedness of false and true
They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due.

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
Can be between the cradle and the grave
Crowned him the King of Life. O vain endeavour!
If on his own high will, a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
What if earth can clothe and feed
Amplest millions at their need,
And power in thought be as the tree within the seed!
O, what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
And cries: "Give me, thy child, dominion
Over all height and depth"? if Life can breed
New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one.

Come Thou, but lead out of the inmost cave

Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the sun from the Eoan wave,
Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;
Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,
To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
O, Liberty! if such could be thy name
Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee:
If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
Wept tears, and blood like tears? The solemn harmony

Paused, and the spirit of that mighty singing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;
Then as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
Sinks headlong through the aërial golden light
On the heavy sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain;
As summer clouds dissolve unburthened of their rain;
As a far taper fades with fading night,
As a brief insect dies with dying day,
My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

TO.....



FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden,
Thou needest not fear mine;
My spirit is too deeply laden
Ever to burthen thine.
I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,
Thou needest not fear mine;
Innocent is the heart's devotion
With which I worship thine.

ARETHUSA.



RETHUSA arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains,
From cloud and from crag,
With many a jag,
Shepherding her bright fountains.
She leapt down the rocks,
With her rainbow locks,
Streaming among the streams;
Her steps paved with green
The downward ravine
Which slopes to the western gleams:
And gliding and springing,
She went, ever singing,
In murmurs as soft as sleep;
The Earth seemed to love her,
And Heaven smiled above her,
As she lingered towards the deep.

Then Alpheus bold,
On his glacier cold,
With his trident the mountains strook
And opened a chasm
In the rocks; with the spasm
All Erymanthus shook.
And the black south wind
It concealed behind
The urns of the silent snow,
And earthquake and thunder
Did rend in sunder
The bars of the springs below.
The beard and the hair
Of the River-god were
Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

"Oh, save me! Oh, guide me!
And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair!"
The loud Ocean heard,
To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer;
And under the water
The Earth's white daughter
Fled like a sunny beam;
Behind her descended
Her billows, unblended

Arethusa With the brackish Dorian stream:
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main
Alpheus rushed behind,
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearlèd thrones,
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods,
Over heaps of unvalued stones;
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a network of coloured light;
And under the caves,
Where the shadowy waves
Are as green as the forest's night:
Outspeeding the shark,
And the swordfish dark,
Under the ocean foam,
And up through the rifts
Of the mountain clifts
They past to their Dorian home.

And now from their fountains
In Enna's mountains,
Down one vale where the morning basks,

Like friends once parted
Grown single-hearted,
They ply their watery tasks.
At sunrise they leap
From their cradles steep
In the cave of the shelving hill;
At noontide they flow
Through the woods below
And the meadows of Asphodel;
And at night they sleep
In the rocking deep
Beneath the Ortygian shore;
Like spirits that lie
In the azure sky
When they love but live no more.

SONG OF PROSERPINE WHILE GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE PLAIN OF ENNA.

SACRED Goddess, Mother
Earth,
Thou from whose immortal
bosom,
Gods, and men, and beasts have
birth,
Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,
Breathe thine influence most divine
On thine own child, Proserpine.

If with mists of evening dew

Song of Proserpine

Thou dost nourish these young flowers
Till they grow, in scent and hue,
Fairest children of the hours,
Breathe thine influence most divine
On thine own child, Proserpine.

HYMN OF APOLLO.



HE sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries,
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,
Waken me when their Mother, the grey Dawn,
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam;
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
Leaves the green earth to my embraces bare.

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;
All men who do or even imagine ill
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminished by the reign of night.

Hymn of Pan

The cicale above in the lime,
And the lizards below in the grass,
Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
Listening to my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
And all dark Tempe lay
In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing
The light of the dying day,
Speeded by my sweet pipings.
The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,
To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
And the brink of the dewy caves,
And all that did then attend and follow,
Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
With envy of my sweet pipings.

I sang of the dancing stars,
I sang of the dædal Earth,
And of Heaven, and the giant wars,
And Love, and Death, and Birth;
And then I changed my pipings,
Singing how down the vale of Mænalus
I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed:
Gods and men, we are all deluded thus!
It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed.
All wept, as I think both ye now would
If envy or age had not frozen your blood,
At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

THE QUESTION.



DREAMED that, as I wandered
by the way,
Bare winter suddenly was changed
to spring,
And gentle odours led my steps
astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the earth,
The constellated flower that never sets;
Faint oxlips; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets
Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth,
Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears,
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured May,
And cherry blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drained not by the day,
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;
And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

The Question

And nearer to the river's trembling edge
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple prankt with white;
And starry river buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light;
And bulrushes and reeds, of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
Within my hand, ... and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it! ... Oh, to whom?

THE TWO SPIRITS: AN ALLEGORY.

1st Spirit



THOU, who plumed with strong desire
Wouldst float above the earth, beware!
A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire....
Night is coming!
Bright are the regions of the air,
And among the winds and beams
It were delight to wander there...
Night is coming!

2nd Spirit The deathless stars are bright above;
If I would cross the shade of night,
Within my heart is the lamp of love,
And that is day!
And the moon will smile with gentle light
On my golden plumes where'er they move;
The meteors will linger round my flight,
And make night day.

1st Spirit But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken
Hail, and lightning, and stormy rain?
See, the bounds of the air are shaken...
Night is coming!
The red swift clouds of the hurricane
Yon declining sun have overtaken,
The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain,
Night is coming!

2nd Spirit I see the light, and I hear the sound;
I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark,
With the calm within and the light around
Which makes night day;
And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark,
Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound,
My moon-like flight thou then may'st mark
On high, far away.

Some say there is a precipice
Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin

O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice
'Mid Alpine mountains;
And that the languid storm pursuing
That wingèd shape for ever flies
Round those hoar branches, aye renewing
Its aëry fountains.

Some say when nights are dry and clear,
And the death-dews sleep on the morass,
Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller,
Which make night day:
And a silver shape like his early love doth pass,
Upborne by her wild and glittering hair,
And, when he awakes on the fragrant grass,
He finds night day.

LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE.

Leghorn, July 1, 1820.



HE spider spreads her webs, whether she be
In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree;
The silkworm in the dark green mulberry leaves
His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves;
So I, a thing whom moralists call worm,
Sit spinning still round this decaying form,
From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought,

No net of words in garish colours wrought, Letter to
To catch the idle buzzers of the day, Maria
But a soft cell, where when that fades away Gisborne
Memory may clothe in wings my living name
And feed it with the asphodels of fame,
Which in those hearts which most remember me
Grow, making love an immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist,
Would think I were a mighty mechanist,
Bent with sublime Archimedean art
To breathe a soul into the iron heart
Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,
Which by the force of figured spells might win
Its way over the sea, and sport therein;
For round the walls are hung dread engines, such
As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch
Ixion or the Titan: or the quick
Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic,
To convince Atheist, Turk or Heretic,
Or those in philanthropic council met,
Who thought to pay some interest for the debt
They owed to Jesus Christ for their salvation,
By giving a faint foretaste of damnation
To Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser and the rest
Who made our land an island of the blest,
When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire
On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire: ...
With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike and jag,
Which fishers found under the utmost crag

Of Cornwall and the storm-encompassed isles,
Where to the sky the rude sea rarely smiles
Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the morn
When the exulting elements in scorn,
Satiated with destroyed destruction, lay
Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,
As panthers sleep:... and other strange and dread
Magical forms the brick floor overspread...
Proteus transformed to metal did not make
More figures, or more strange; nor did he take
Such shapes of unintelligible brass,
Or heap himself in such a horrid mass
Of tin and iron, not to be understood,
And forms of unimaginable wood,
To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood:
Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and groovèd blocks,
The elements of what will stand the shocks
Of wave and wind and time. Upon the table
More knacks and quips there be than I am able
To catalogize in this verse of mine:
A pretty bowl of wood, not full of wine,
But quicksilver; that dew which the gnomes drink
When at their subterranean toil they swink,
Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who
Reply to them in lava, cry halloo!
And call out to the cities o'er their head,
Roofs, towers and shrines, the dying and the dead,
Crash through the chinks of earth, and then all quaff
Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh.

This quicksilver no gnome has drunk; within
The walnut bowl it lies, veinèd and thin,
In colour like the wake of light that stains
The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains
The inmost shower of its white fire, the breeze
Is still, blue heaven smiles over the pale seas.
And in this bowl of quicksilver... for I
Yield to the impulse of an infancy
Outlasting manhood... I have made to float
A rude idealism of a paper boat:
A hollow screw with cogs, Henry will know
The thing I mean and laugh at me, if so
He fears not I should do more mischief. Next
Lie bills and calculations much perplext,
With steamboats, frigates, and machinery quaint
Traced over them in blue and yellow paint.
Then comes a range of mathematical
Instruments, for plans nautical and statical;
A heap of rosin, a queer broken glass
With ink in it; a china cup that was
What it will never be again, I think,
A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink
The liquor doctors rail at, and which I
Will quaff in spite of them, and when we die
We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea,
And cry out, "heads or tails?" where'er we be.
Near that a dusty paint box, some odd hooks,
A half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books,
Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms,
To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims,

Lie heaped in their harmonious disarray
Of figures, disentangle them who may.
Baron de Tott's Memoirs beside them lie,
And some odd volumes of old chemistry.
Near those a most inexplicable thing,
With lead in the middle, I'm conjecturing
How to make Henry understand; but no,
I'll leave, as Spenser says, with many mo,
This secret in the pregnant womb of time,
Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme.

And here like some weird Archimage sit I,
Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,
The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind
Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind
The gentle spirit of our meek reviews
Into a powdery foam of salt abuse,
Ruffling the ocean of their self-content;
I sit, and smile or sigh as is my bent,
But not for them; Libeccio rushes round
With an inconstant and an idle sound,
I heed him more than them; the thunder-smoke
Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak
Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare;
The ripe corn under the undulating air
Undulates like an ocean; and the vines
Are trembling wide in all their trellised lines.
The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill
The empty pauses of the blast; the hill
Looks hoary through the white electric rain,

And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain, Letter to
The interrupted thunder howls; above Maria
One chasm of heaven smiles, like the eye of Love Gisborne
On the unquiet world; while such things are,
How could one worth your friendship heed the war
Of worms? the shriek of the world's carrion jays,
Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise?

You are not here! the quaint witch Memory sees
In vacant chairs, your absent images,
And points where once you sat, and now should be
But are not. I demand if ever we
Shall meet as then we met; and she replies,
Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes;
"I know the past alone, but summon home
My sister Hope, she speaks of all to come."
But I, an old diviner, who knew well
Every false verse of that sweet oracle,
Turned to the sad enchantress once again,
And sought a respite from my gentle pain,
In citing every passage o'er and o'er
Of our communion; how on the seashore
We watched the ocean and the sky together,
Under the roof of blue Italian weather;
How I ran home through last year's thunderstorm,
And felt the transverse lightning linger warm
Upon my cheek; and how we often made
Feasts for each other, where good-will outweighed
The frugal luxury of our country cheer,
As well it might, were it less firm and clear

Than ours must ever be; and how we spun
A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun
Of this familiar life, which seems to be
But is not, or is but quaint mockery
Of all we would believe, and sadly blame
The jarring and inexplicable frame
Of this wrong world: and then anatomize
The purposes and thoughts of men whose eyes
Were closed in distant years; or widely guess
The issue of the earth's great business,
When we shall be as we no longer are,
Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war
Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not; or how
You listened to some interrupted flow
Of visionary rhyme, in joy and pain
Struck from the inmost fountains of my brain,
With little skill perhaps; or how we sought
Those deepest wells of passion or of thought
Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,
Staining their sacred waters with our tears;
Quenching a thirst ever to be renewed!
Or how I, wisest lady! then indued
The language of a land which now is free,
And, winged with thoughts of truth and majesty,
Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud,
And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud,
"My name is Legion!" that majestic tongue
Which Calderon over the desert flung
Of ages and of nations; and which found
An echo in our hearts, and with the sound

Startled oblivion; thou wert then to me
As is a nurse, when inarticulately
A child would talk as its grown parents do.
If living winds the rapid clouds pursue,
If hawks chase doves through the ætherial way,
Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey,
Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast
Out of the forest of the pathless past
These recollected pleasures?

Letter to Maria Gisborne

You are now
In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow
At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore
Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more.
Yet in its depth what treasures! You will see
That which was Godwin, greater none than he
Though fallen, and fallen on evil times, to stand
Among the spirits of our age and land,
Before the dread tribunal of To come
The foremost, while Rebuke cowers pale and dumb.
You will see Coleridge, he who sits obscure
In the exceeding lustre and the pure
Intense irradiation of a mind,
Which, with its own internal lightning blind,
Flags wearily through darkness and despair,
A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,
A hooded eagle among blinking owls.
You will see Hunt, one of those happy souls
Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom
This world would smell like what it is ... a tomb;

Who is, what others seem; his room no doubt
Is still adorned by many a cast from Shout,
With graceful flowers tastefully placed about;
And coronals of bay from ribbons hung,
And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung;
The gifts of the most learn'd among some dozens
Of female friends, sisters-in-law and cousins.
And there is he with his eternal puns,
Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns
Thundering for money at a poet's door;
Alas! it is no use to say, "I'm poor!"
Or oft in graver mood, when he will look
Things wiser than were ever read in book,
Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.
You will see Hogg, and I cannot express
His virtues, though I know that they are great,
Because he locks, then barricades the gate
Within which they inhabit; of his wit
And wisdom you'll cry out when you are bit.
He is a pearl within an oyster shell,
One of the richest of the deep. And there
Is English Peacock, with his mountain fair,
Turned into a Flamingo; that shy bird
That gleams i' the Indian air; have you not heard
When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,
His best friends hear no more of him? But you
Will see him, and will like him too, I hope,
With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope
Matched with this cameleopard; his fine wit
Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it;

A strain too learnèd for a shallow age, Letter to
Too wise for selfish bigots; let his page Maria
Which charms the chosen spirits of the time Gisborne
Fold itself up for the serener clime
Of years to come, and find its recompense
In that just expectation. Wit and sense,
Virtue and human knowledge; all that might
Make this dull world a business of delight,
Are all combined in Horace Smith. And these,
With some exceptions, which I need not tease
Your patience by descanting on, are all
You and I know in London.

I recall
My thoughts, and bid you look upon the night.
As water does a sponge, so the moonlight
Fills the void, hollow, universal air.
What see you? unpavilioned heaven is fair
Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,
Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan
Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep;
Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,
Piloted by the many-wandering blast,
And the rare stars rush through them dim and fast:
All this is beautiful in every land.
But what see you beside? a shabby stand
Of Hackney coaches, a brick house or wall
Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl
Of our unhappy politics; or worse,
A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse

Mixed with the watchman's, partner of her trade,
You must accept in place of serenade,
Or yellow-haired Pollonia murmuring
To Henry, some unutterable thing.
I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit
Built round dark caverns, even to the root
Of the living stems that feed them, in whose bowers
There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers;
Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn
Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne
In circles quaint, and ever-changing dance,
Like wingèd stars the fire-flies flash and glance,
Pale in the open moonshine, but each one
Under the dark trees seems a little sun,
A meteor tamed; a fixed star gone astray
From the silver regions of the milky way;
Afar the Contadino's song is heard,
Rude, but made sweet by distance, and a bird
Which cannot be the Nightingale, and yet
I know none else that sings so sweet as it
At this late hour; and then all is still;
Now Italy or London, which you will!

Next winter you must pass with me; I'll have
My house by that time turned into a grave
Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,
And all the dreams which our tormentors are;
Oh! that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock and Smith were
there,
With every thing belonging to them fair!

We will have books, Spanish, Italian, Greek; Letter to
And ask one week to make another week Maria
As like his father, as I'm unlike mine, Gisborne
Which is not his fault, as you may divine.
Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,
Yet let's be merry: we'll have tea and toast;
Custards for supper, and an endless host
Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies,
And other such lady-like luxuries,
Feasting on which we will philosophize!
And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood,
To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood.
And then we'll talk; what shall we talk about?
Oh! there are themes enough for many a bout
Of thought-entangled descant; as to nerves,
With cones and parallelograms and curves
I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare
To bother me when you are with me there.
And they shall never more sip laudanum,
From Helicon or Himeros; well, come,
And in despite of God and of the devil,
We'll make our friendly philosophic revel
Outlast the leafless time; till buds and flowers
Warn the obscure inevitable hours
Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew;...
"Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

ODE TO NAPLES.

Epode I. a.



STOOD within the city disinterred;
And heard the autumnal leaves like light footfalls
Of spirits passing through the streets; and heard
The Mountain's slumberous voice at intervals
Thrill through those roofless halls;
The oracular thunder penetrating shook
The listening soul in my suspended blood;
I felt that Earth out of her deep heart spoke,
I felt, but heard not: through white columns glowed
The isle-sustaining Ocean-flood,
A plane of light between two Heavens of azure:
Around me gleamed many a bright sepulchre
Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his pleasure
Were to spare Death, had never made erasure;
But every living lineament was clear
As in the sculptor's thought; and there
The wreaths of stony myrtle, ivy and pine,
Like winter leaves o'ergrown by moulded snow,
Seemed only not to move and grow
Because the crystal silence of the air
Weighed on their life; even as the Power divine
Which then lulled all things, brooded upon mine.

Epode II. a.

THEN gentle winds arose
With many a mingled close
Of wild Æolian sound and mountain-odour keen;
And where the Baian ocean
Welters with the air-like motion,
Within, above, around its bowers of starry green,
Moving the sea-flowers in those purple caves,
Even as the ever stormless atmosphere
Floats o'er the Elysian realm,
It bore me, like an angel, o'er the waves
Of sunlight, whose swift pinnace of dewy air
No storm can overwhelm;
I sailed where ever flows
Under the calm Serene
A spirit of deep emotion
From the unknown graves
Of the dead kings of Melody.
Shadowy Aornos darkened o'er the helm
The horizontal æther; heaven stript bare
Its depths over Elysium, where the prow
Made the invisible water white as snow;
From that Typhæan mount, Inarimé,
There streamed a sunlight vapour, like the standard
Of some ætherial host;
Whilst from all the coast,
Louder and louder, gathering round, there wandered
Over the oracular woods and divine sea
Prophesyings which grew articulate,
They seize me ... I must speak them ... be they fate!

Strophe a 1.

NAPLES! thou Heart of men, which ever pantest
Naked, beneath the lidless eye of heaven!
Elysian City, which to calm enchantest
The mutinous air and sea: they round thee, even
As sleep round Love, are driven!
Metropolis of a ruined Paradise
Long lost, late won, and yet but half regained!
Bright Altar of the bloodless sacrifice,
Which armèd Victory offers up unstained
To Love, the flower-enchained!
Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be,
Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,
If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can avail,
Hail, hail, all hail!

Strophe b 2.

THOU youngest giant birth,
Which from the groaning earth
Leap'st, clothed in armour of impenetrable scale!
Last of the Intercessors!
Who 'gainst the Crowned Transgressors
Pleadest before God's love! Arrayed in Wisdom's mail,
Wave thy lightning lance in mirth,
Nor let thy high heart fail,
Though from their hundred gates the leagued Oppressors,
With hurried legions move!
Hail, hail, all hail!

Antistrophe a 1.

WHAT though Cimmerian anarchs dare blaspheme
Freedom and thee? thy shield is as a mirror
To make their blind slaves see, and with fierce gleam
To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer;
A new Actæon's error
Shall theirs have been ... devoured by their own hounds!
Be thou like the imperial Basilisk,
Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds!
Gaze on oppression, till at that dread risk
Aghast, she pass from the Earth's disk:
Fear not, but gaze, for freemen mightier grow,
And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe;
If Hope and Truth and Justice may avail,
Thou shalt be great.... All hail!

Antistrophe b 2.

FROM Freedom's form divine,
From Nature's inmost shrine,
Strip every impious gaud, rend Error veil by veil;
O'er Ruin desolate,
O'er Falsehood's fallen state,
Sit thou sublime, unawed; be the Destroyer pale!
And equal laws be thine,
And wingèd words let sail,
Freighted with truth even from the throne of God;
That wealth, surviving fate,
Be thine.... All hail!

Antistrophe a g.

DIDST thou not start to hear Spain's thrilling pæan
From land to land re-echoed solemnly,
Till silence became music? From the Ægean
To the cold Alps, eternal Italy
Starts to hear thine! The Sea
Which paves the desert streets of Venice laughs
In light and music; widowed Genoa wan
By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs,
Murmuring, Where is Doria? Fair Milan,
Within whose veins long ran
The viper's palsying venom, lifts her heel
To bruise his head. The signal and the seal
(If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail)
Art thou of all these hopes. ... O hail!

Antistrophe b g.

FLORENCE! beneath the sun,
Of cities fairest one,
Blushes within her bower for Freedom's expectation:
From eyes of quenchless hope
Rome tears the priestly cope,
As ruling once by power, so now by admiration,
An athlete stripped to run
From a remoter station
For the high prize lost on Philippi's shore:
As then Hope, Truth, and Justice did avail,
So now may Fraud and Wrong! ... O hail!

Epode I. b.
HEAR ye the march as of the Earth-born Forms
Arrayed against the ever-living Gods?
The crash and darkness of a thousand storms
Bursting their inaccessible abodes
Of crags and thunder-clouds?
See ye the banners blazoned to the day,
Inwrought with emblems of barbaric pride?
Dissonant threats kill Silence far away,
The serene Heaven which wraps our Eden wide
With iron light is dyed,
The Anarchs of the North lead forth their legions
Like Chaos o'er creation, uncreating;
An hundred tribes nourished on strange religions
And lawless slaveries,... down the aërial regions
Of the white Alps, desolating,
Famished wolves that bide no waiting,
Blotting the glowing footsteps of old glory,
Trampling our columned cities into dust,
Their dull and savage lust
On Beauty's corse to sickness satiating...
They come! The fields they tread look black and hoary
With fire... from their red feet the streams run gory!

Epode II. b.
GREAT Spirit, deepest Love!
Which rulest and dost move

All things which live and are, within the Italian shore;
Who spreadest heaven around it,
Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it;
Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western floor;
Spirit of beauty! at whose soft command
The sunbeams and the showers distil its foison
From the Earth's bosom chill;
Oh, bid those beams be each a blinding brand
Of lightning! bid those showers be dews of poison!
Bid the Earth's plenty kill!
Bid thy bright Heaven above,
Whilst light and darkness bound it,
Be their tomb who planned
To make it ours and thine!
Or, with thine harmonizing ardours fill
And raise thy sons, as o'er the prone horizon
Thy lamp feeds every twilight wave with fire,
Be man's high hope and unextinct desire
The instrument to work thy will divine!
Then clouds from sunbeams, antelopes from leopards,
And frowns and fears from Thee,
Would not more swiftly flee,
Than Celtic wolves from the Ausonian shepherds.
Whatever, Spirit, from thy starry shrine
Thou yieldest or withholdest, Oh let be
This city of thy worship ever free!

AUTUMN: A DIRGE.

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,
And the year
On the earth, her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
Is lying.
Come, Months, come away,
From November to May,
In your saddest array;
Follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

The chill rain is falling, the nipped worm is crawling,
The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
For the year;
The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone
To his dwelling;
Come, Months, come away;
Put on white, black, and grey;
Let your light sisters play,
Ye, follow the bier
Of the dead cold year,
And make her grave green with tear on tear.

DEATH.



EATH is here and death is there,
Death is busy everywhere,
All around, within, beneath,
Above, is death, and we are death.
Death has set his mark and seal
On all we are and all we feel,
On all we know and all we fear,

. . . . . .

First our pleasures die, and then
Our hopes, and then our fears, and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust, and we die too.

All things that we love and cherish,
Like ourselves must fade and perish;
Such is our rude mortal lot...
Love itself would, did they not.

LIBERTY.



HE fiery mountains answer each other;
Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone;
The tempestuous oceans awake one another,
And the ice-rocks are shaken round Winter's throne,
When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown.

From a single cloud the lightning flashes,
Whilst a thousand isles are illumined around,
Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes,
An hundred are shuddering & tottering; the sound
Is bellowing underground.

But keener thy gaze than the lightning's glare,
And swifter thy step than the earthquake's tramp;
Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean; thy stare
Makes blind the volcanoes; the sun's bright lamp
To thine is a fen-fire damp.

From billow and mountain and exhalation
The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast;
From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation,
From city to hamlet, thy dawning is cast,
And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night
In the van of the morning light.

SUMMER AND WINTER.

IT was a bright and cheerful afternoon
Towards the end of the sunny month of June,
When the north wind congregates in crowds
The floating mountains of the silver clouds
From the horizon, and the stainless sky
Opens beyond them like eternity.
All things rejoiced beneath the sun; the weeds,

The river, and the cornfields, and the reeds;
The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
And the firm foliage of the larger trees.

It was a winter such as when birds die
In the deep forests; and the fishes lie
Stiffened in the translucent ice, which makes
Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes
A wrinkled clod as hard as brick; and when,
Among their children, comfortable men
Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold:
Alas then for the homeless beggar old!

THE TOWER OF FAMINE.

AMID the desolation of a city,
Which was the cradle and is now the grave
Of an extinguished people; so that pity
Weeps o'er the shipwrecks of oblivion's wave,
There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built
Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave

For bread, & gold, & blood: pain, linked to guilt,
Agitates the light flame of their hours,
Until its vital oil is spent or spilt:

There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers
And sacred domes; each marble-ribbèd roof,
The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers

Of solitary wealth; the tempest-proof
Pavilions of the dark Italian air,
Are by its presence dimmed, they stand aloof,

And are withdrawn, so that the world is bare,
As if a spectre, wrapt in shapeless terror,
Amid a company of ladies fair

Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror
Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue,
The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,
Should be absorbed, till they to marble grew.

AN ALLEGORY.

A PORTAL as of shadowy adamant
Stands yawning on the highway of the life
Which we all tread, a cavern huge and gaunt;
Around it rages an unceasing strife
Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt
The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high
Into the whirlwinds of the upper sky.

And many pass it by with careless tread,
Not knowing that a shadowy .....
Tracks every traveller even to where the dead
Wait peacefully for their companion new;
But others, by more curious humour led,

Pause to examine; these are very few,
And they learn little there, except to know
That shadows follow them where'er they go.

THE WORLD'S WANDERERS.



ELL me, thou star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
Will thy pinions close now?

Tell me, moon, thou pale and grey
Pilgrim of heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
Seekest thou repose now?

Weary wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest,
Hast thou still some secret nest
On the tree or billow?

SONNET.



E hasten to the grave! What seek ye there,
Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes
Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear?
O thou quick heart which pantest to possess

All that pale expectation feigneth fair!
Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest guess
Whence thou didst come, & whither thou must go,
And all that never yet was known wouldst know,
Oh, whither hasten ye, that thus ye press
With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path,
Seeking, alike from happiness and woe,
A refuge in the cavern of grey death?
O heart, and mind, & thoughts, what thing do you
Hope to inherit in the grave below?

LINES TO A REVIEWER.

ALAS, good friend, what profit can you see
In hating such a hateless thing as me?
There is no sport in hate when all the rage
Is on one side: in vain would you assuage
Your frowns upon an unresisting smile,
In which not even contempt lurks to beguile
Your heart, by some faint sympathy of hate.
Oh, conquer what you cannot satiate;
For to your passion I am far more coy
Than ever yet was coldest maid or boy
In winter noon. Of your antipathy,
If I am the Narcissus, you are free
To pine into a sound with hating me.

TIME LONG PAST.



IKE the ghost of a dear friend dead
Is Time long past.
A tone which is now for ever fled,
A hope which is now for ever past,
A love so sweet it could not last,
Was Time long past.

There were sweet dreams in the night
Of Time long past:
And, was it sadness or delight,
Each day a shadow onward cast
Which made us wish it yet might last,
That Time long past.

There is regret, almost remorse,
For Time long past.
'Tis like a child's belovèd corse
A father watches, till at last
Beauty is like remembrance, cast
From Time long past.

BUONA NOTTE.



UONA notte, buona notte!" ...
Come mai
La notte sarà buona senza te?
Non dirmi buona notte, ... chè tu
sai,
La notte sà star buona da per sè.

Solinga, scura, cupa, senza speme,
La notte quando Lilla m'abbandona;
Pei cuori chi si batton insieme
Ogni notte, senza dirla, sarà buona.

Come male buona notte si suona
Con sospiri e parole interrotte!
Il modo di aver la notte buona
E mai non di dir la buona notte.

GOOD-NIGHT.

GOOD-NIGHT? ah! no; the hour
is ill
Which severs those it should unite;
Let us remain together still,
Then it will be good night.
How can I call the lone night good,
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?
Be it not said, thought, understood,
Then it will be good night.

To hearts which near each other move
From evening close to morning light,
The night is good; because, my love,
They never say good-night.

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR.

ORPHAN hours, the year is dead,
Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry hours, smile instead,
For the year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So White Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold year to-day;
Solemn hours! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days
Rocks the year: be calm and mild,
Trembling hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

January grey is here,
Like a sexton by her grave;
February bears the bier,
March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps, but, O, ye hours,
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

TIME.

UNFATHOMABLE Sea! whose
waves are years,
Ocean of Time, whose waters of
deep woe
Are brackish with the salt of
human tears!
Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
Claspest the limits of mortality!
And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore;
Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
Who shall put forth on thee,
Unfathomable Sea?

FROM THE ARABIC.

An Imitation.

MY faint spirit was sitting in the
light
Of thy looks, my love;
It panted for thee like the hind at
noon
For the brooks, my love.
Thy barb, whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's
flight,
Bore thee far from me;
My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,
Did companion thee.

Ah! fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,

From the Arabic

Or the death they bear,
The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove
With the wings of care;
In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,
Shall mine cling to thee,
Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
It may bring to thee.

SONG.



ARELY, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight!
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Song

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure;
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure;
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of Delight!
The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
And the starry night;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
Everything almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise and good;
Between thee and me
What difference? but thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love, though he has wings,
And like light can flee,

Song

But above all things,
Spirit, I love thee,
Thou art love and life! O come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

TO NIGHT.

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand,
Come, long-sought!

When I arose, and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me? And I replied,
No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon;
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovèd Night,
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

TO.....

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory;
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they
quicken.
Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

TO.....



HEN passion's trance is overpast,
If tenderness and truth could last
Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep
Some mortal slumber, dark & deep,
I should not weep, I should not
weep!

It were enough to feel, to see,
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
And dream the rest, and burn and be
The secret food of fires unseen,
Couldst thou but be as thou hast been.

After the slumber of the year
The woodland violets reappear,
All things revive in field or grove,
And sky and sea, but two, which move
And form all others, life and love.

MUTABILITY.



HE flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies;
All that we wish to stay,
Tempts and then flies.
What is this world's delight?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.

Virtue, how frail it is!

Friendship how rare!
Love, how it sells poor bliss
For proud despair!
But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy and all
Which ours we call.

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
Whilst flowers are gay,
Whilst eyes that change ere night
Make glad the day;
Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
Dream thou, and from thy sleep
Then wake to weep.

LINES.



AR, far away, O ye
Halcyons of memory,
Seek some far calmer nest
Than this abandoned breast;
No news of your false spring
To my heart's winter bring,
Once having gone, in vain
Ye come again.

Vultures, who build your bowers
High in the Future's towers,
Withered hopes on hopes are spread,
Dying joys, choked by the dead,
Will serve your beaks for prey
Many a day.

THE FUGITIVES.



HE waters are flashing,
The white hail is dashing,
The lightnings are glancing,
The hoar-spray is dancing,
Away!
The whirlwind is rolling,
The thunder is tolling,
The forest is swinging,
The minster bells ringing,
Come away!

The Earth is like Ocean,
Wreck-strewn and in motion:
Bird, beast, man and worm
Have crept out of the storm.
Come away!

"Our boat has one sail,
And the helmsman is pale;
A bold pilot I trow,
Who should follow us now,"
Shouted He;

And she cried, "Ply the oar!
Put off gaily from shore!"
As she spoke, bolts of death
Mixed with hail, specked their path
O'er the sea.

And from isle, tower and rock,
The blue beacon cloud broke
And though dumb in the blast,
The red cannon flashed fast
From the lee.

"And fear'st thou, and fear'st thou?
And see'st thou, and hear'st thou?
And drive we not free
O'er the terrible sea,
I and thou?"

One boat-cloak did cover
The loved and the lover;
Their blood beats one measure,
They murmur proud pleasure
Soft and low;

While around the lashed Ocean,
Like mountains in motion,
Is withdrawn and uplifted,
Sunk, shattered and shifted
To and fro.

In the court of the fortress
Beside the pale portress,
Like a bloodhound well beaten
The bridegroom stands, eaten
By shame;

On the topmost watch-turret,
As a death-boding spirit,
Stands the grey tyrant father;
To his voice the mad weather
Seems tame;

And with curses as wild
As e'er clung to child,
He devotes to the blast
The best, loveliest, and last
Of his name!

LINES WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON.



HAT! alive and so bold, oh Earth?
Art thou not over-bold?
What! leapest thou forth as of old
In the light of thy morning mirth,
The last of the flock of the starry fold?
Ha! leapest thou forth as of old?
Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,
And canst thou move, Napoleon being dead?

How! is not thy quick heart cold?
What spark is alive on thy hearth?
How! is not his death-knell knolled?
And livest thou still, Mother Earth?
Thou wert warming thy fingers old

O'er the embers covered and cold
Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled;
What, Mother, do you laugh now he is dead?

"Who has known me of old," replied Earth,
"Or who has my story told?
It is thou who art over-bold."
And the lightning of scorn laughed forth
As she sung, "To my bosom I fold
All my sons when their knell is knolled,
And so with living motion all are fed,
And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.

"Still alive and still bold," shouted Earth,
"I grow bolder, and still more bold.
The dead fill me ten thousand-fold
Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth.
I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,
Like a frozen chaos uprolled,
Till by the spirit of the mighty dead
My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.

"Ay, alive and still bold," muttered Earth,
"Napoleon's fierce spirit rolled,
In terror and blood and gold,
A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.
Leave the millions who follow to mould
The metal before it be cold;
And weave into his shame, which like the dead
Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled."

SONNET: POLITICAL GREATNESS.



OR happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,
Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame;
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,
History is but the shadow of their shame,
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts
As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit
By force or custom? Man who man would be
Must rule the empire of himself; in it
Must be supreme, establishing his throne
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

A BRIDAL SONG.



HE golden gates of Sleep unbar
Where Strength and Beauty, met together,
Kindle their image like a star
In a sea of glassy weather.
Night, with all thy stars look down,
Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,
Never smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true.

Let eyes not see their own delight;
Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight
Oft renew.

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her!
Holy stars, permit no wrong!
And return to wake the sleeper,
Dawn, ere it be long.
Oh joy! oh fear! what will be done
In the absence of the sun!
Come along!

EPITHALAMIUM.



IGHT, with all thine eyes look down!
Darkness, shed its holiest dew!
When ever smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true?
Hence, coy hour! and quench thy light,
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Hence, swift hour! and thy loved flight
Oft renew.

Boys Oh joy! oh fear! what may be done
In the absence of the sun?
Come along!

The golden gates of sleep unbar!
When strength and beauty meet together,

Epithalamium

Kindles their image like a star
In a sea of glassy weather.
Hence, coy hour! and quench thy light,
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Hence, swift hour! and thy loved flight
Oft renew.

Girls

Oh joy! oh fear! what may be done
In the absence of the sun?
Come along!

Fairies! sprites! and angels keep her!
Holiest powers, permit no wrong!
And return, to wake the sleeper,
Dawn, ere it be long.
Hence, swift hour! and quench thy light,
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Hence, coy hour! and thy loved flight
Oft renew.

Boys and Girls

Oh joy! oh fear! what will be done
In the absence of the sun?
Come along!

ANOTHER VERSION.

Boys sing

NIGHT! with all thine eyes look down!
Darkness! weep thy holiest dew!
Never smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true.
Haste, coy hour! & quench all light

Lest eyes see their own delight!
Haste, swift hour! and thy loved flight
Oft renew!

Girls sing Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her!
Holy stars! permit no wrong!
And return to wake the sleeper,
Dawn, ere it be long!
Oh joy! oh fear! there is not one
Of us can guess what may be done
In the absence of the sun:
Come along!

Boys Oh, linger long, thou envious eastern lamp
In the damp
Caves of the deep!

Girls Nay, return, Vesper! urge thy lazy car!
Swift unbar
The gates of Sleep!

Chorus The golden gate of Sleep unbar,
When Strength and Beauty, met together,
Kindle their image, like a star
In a sea of glassy weather.
May the purple mist of love
Round them rise, and with them move,
Nourishing each tender gem
Which, like flowers, will burst from them.
As the fruit is to the tree
May their children ever be!

EVENING.

Ponte a Mare, Pisa.

THE sun is set; the swallows are asleep;
The bats are flitting fast in the grey air;
The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep,
And evening's breath, wandering here and there
Over the quivering surface of the stream,
Wakes not one ripple from its summer dream.

There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,
Nor damp within the shadow of the trees;
The wind is intermitting, dry, and light;
And in the inconstant motion of the breeze
The dust and straws are driven up and down,
And whirled about the pavement of the town.

Within the surface of the fleeting river
The wrinkled image of the city lay,
Immovably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it never fades away;
Go to the....
You, being changed, will find it then as now.

The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut
By darkest barriers of cinereous cloud,
Like mountain over mountain huddled, but
Growing and moving upwards in a crowd,

And over it a space of watery blue,
Which the keen evening star is shining through.

THE AZIOLA.



O you not hear the Aziola cry?
Methinks she must be nigh,"
Said Mary, as we sate
In dusk, ere stars were lit, or candles brought;
And I, who thought
This Aziola was some tedious woman,
Asked, "Who is Aziola?" How elate
I felt to know that it was nothing human,
No mockery of myself to fear or hate:
And Mary saw my soul,
And laughed, and said, "Disquiet yourself not;
'Tis nothing but a little downy owl."

Sad Aziola! many an eventide
Thy music I had heard
By wood and stream, meadow and mountain-side,
And fields and marshes wide,
Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird,
The soul ever stirred;
Unlike and far sweeter than them all.
Sad Aziola! from that moment I
Loved thee and thy sad cry.

TO .....

ONE word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

REMEMBRANCE.

SWIFTER far than summer's flight,
Swifter far than youth's delight,
Swifter far than happy night,
Art thou come and gone.
As the wood when leaves are shed,
As the night when sleep is fled,
As the heart when joy is dead,
I am left lone, alone.

The swallow summer comes again,
The owlet night resumes his reign,
But the wild-swan youth is fain
To fly with thee, false as thou.
My heart each day desires the morrow;
Sleep itself is turned to sorrow;
Vainly would my winter borrow
Sunny leaves from any bough.

Lilies for a bridal bed,
Roses for a matron's head,
Violets for a maiden dead,
Pansies let MY flowers be;
On the living grave I bear,
Scatter them without a tear;
Let no friend, however dear,
Waste one hope, one fear for me.

TO EDWARD WILLIAMS.

THE serpent is shut out from paradise.
The wounded deer must seek the herb no more
In which its heart-cure lies:
The widowed dove must cease to haunt a bower
Like that from which its mate with feignèd sighs
Fled in the April hour.
I too must seldom seek again
Near happy friends a mitigated pain.

To Edward Williams

Of hatred I am proud, with scorn content;
Indifference, that once hurt me, now is grown
Itself indifferent;
But, not to speak of love, pity alone
Can break a spirit already more than bent.
The miserable one
Turns the mind's poison into food,
Its medicine is tears, its evil good.

Therefore, if now I see you seldomer,
Dear friends, dear FRIEND! know that I only fly
Your looks, because they stir
Griefs that should sleep, and hopes that cannot die:
The very comfort that they minister
I scarce can bear, yet I,
So deeply is the arrow gone,
Should quickly perish if it were withdrawn.

When I return to my cold home, you ask
Why I am not as I have ever been.
YOU spoil me for the task
Of acting a forced part in life's dull scene,
Of wearing on my brow the idle mask
Of author, great or mean,
In the world's carnival. I sought
Peace thus, and but in you I found it not.

Full half an hour, to-day, I tried my lot
With various flowers, and every one still said,
"She loves me... loves me not."
And if this meant a vision long since fled,

If it meant fortune, fame, or peace of thought,
If it meant, ... but I dread
To speak what you may know too well:
Still there was truth in the sad oracle.

The crane o'er seas and forests seeks her home;
No bird so wild but has its quiet nest,
When it no more would roam;
The sleepless billows on the ocean's breast
Break like a bursting heart, and die in foam,
And thus at length find rest.
Doubtless there is a place of peace
Where MY weak heart & all its throbs will cease.

I asked her, yesterday, if she believed
That I had resolution. One who HAD
Would ne'er have thus relieved
His heart with words, but what his judgment bade
Would do, and leave the scorner unrelieved.
These verses are too sad
To send to you, but that I know,
Happy yourself, you feel another's woe.

TO-MORROW.



HERE art thou, beloved To-
morrow?
When young and old, and strong
and weak,
Rich and poor, through joy and
sorrow,

To-
morrow

Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,
In thy place... ah! well-a-day!
We find the thing we fled... To-day.

IF I walk in Autumn's even
While the dead leaves pass,
If I look on Spring's soft heaven,
Something is not there which was.
Winter's wondrous frost and snow,
Summer's clouds, where are they now?

A LAMENT.



H, world! oh, life! oh, time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more... O, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more,... O, never more!

LINES.



HEN the lamp is shattered,
The light in the dust lies dead;
When the cloud is scattered,
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendour
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute:
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest,
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possest.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high:

Lines

Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

THE MAGNETIC LADY TO HER PATIENT.



LEEP, sleep on! forget thy pain;
My hand is on thy brow,
My spirit on thy brain;
My pity on thy heart, poor friend;
And from my fingers flow
The powers of life, and like a sign,
Seal thee from thine hour of woe;
And brood on thee, but may not blend
With thine.

"Sleep, sleep on! I love thee not;
But when I think that he
Who made and makes my lot
As full of flowers, as thine of weeds,
Might have been lost like thee;
And that a hand which was not mine,
Might then have charmed his agony
As I another's ... my heart bleeds
For thine.

"Sleep, sleep, and with the slumber of

The dead and the unborn
Forget thy life and love;
Forget that thou must wake for ever;
Forget the world's dull scorn;
Forget lost health, and the divine
Feelings which died in youth's brief morn;
And forget me, for I can never
Be thine.

"Like a cloud big with a May shower,
My soul weeps healing rain
On thee, thou withered flower;
It breathes mute music on thy sleep;
Its odour calms thy brain;
Its light within thy gloomy breast
Spreads like a second youth again.
By mine thy being is to its deep
Possest.

"The spell is done. How feel you now?"
"Better... Quite well," replied
The sleeper.... "What would do
You good when suffering and awake?
What cure your head and side?"
"What would cure, that would kill me, Jane;
And as I must on earth abide
Awhile, yet tempt me not to break
My chain."

TO JANE:
THE INVITATION.



EST and brightest, come away!
Fairer far than this fair Day,
Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough Year just awake
In its cradle on the brake.
The brightest hour of unborn Spring,
Through the winter wandering,
Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn,
To hoar February born;
Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
It kissed the forehead of the Earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free,
And waked to music all their fountains,
And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
And like a prophetess of May
Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
Making the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, dear.

Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and the downs;

To the silent wilderness
Where the soul need not repress
Its music lest it should not find
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.
I leave this notice on my door
For each accustomed visitor:
"I am gone into the fields
To take what this sweet hour yields.
Reflection, you may come to-morrow,
Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.
You with the unpaid bill, Despair,
You, tiresome verse-reciter, Care,
I will pay you in the grave,
Death will listen to your stave.
Expectation too, be off!
To-day is for itself enough.
Hope, in pity mock not Woe
With smiles, nor follow where I go;
Long having lived on thy sweet food,
At length I find one moment's good
After long pain ... with all your love,
This you never told me of."

Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
And the pools where winter rains
Image all their roof of leaves,

The Invitation

Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green and ivy dun,
Round stems that never kiss the sun;
Where the lawns and pastures be
And the sand-hills of the sea;
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,
And wind-flowers, and violets,
Which yet join not scent to hue,
Crown the pale year weak and new;
When the night is left behind
In the deep east, dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where the earth and ocean meet,
And all things seem only one,
In the universal sun.

THE RECOLLECTION.

NOW the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead,
Rise, Memory, and write its praise!
Up to thy wonted work! come, trace
The epitaph of glory fled,
For now the Earth has changed its face,
A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

We wandered to the Pine Forest

That skirts the Ocean's foam,
The lightest wind was in its nest,
The tempest in its home.
The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep
The smile of Heaven lay;
It seemed as if the hour were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scattered from above the sun
A light of Paradise.

We paused amid the pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
As serpents interlaced,
And soothed by every azure breath,
That under heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
As tender as its own;
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,
Like green waves on the sea,
As still as in the silent deep
The ocean woods may be.

How calm it was!...the silence there
By such a chain was bound
That even the busy woodpecker
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness;

The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
The calm that round us grew.
There seemed, from the remotest seat
Of the white mountain waste,
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced,
A spirit interfused around,
A thrilling silent life,
To momentary peace it bound
Our mortal nature's strife;
And still I felt the centre of
The magic circle there
Was one fair form that filled with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,
Each seemed as 'twere a little sky
Gulfed in a world below;
A firmament of purple light,
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of night,
And purer than the day,
In which the lovely forests grew,
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any spreading there.
There lay the glade and neighbouring lawn,
And through the dark green wood

The white sun twinkling like the dawn
Out of a speckled cloud.
Sweet views which in our world above
Can never well be seen,
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.
And all was interfused beneath
With an elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath,
A softer day below.
Like one beloved the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast,
Its every leaf and lineament
With more than truth exprest;
Until an envious wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from the mind's too faithful eye
Blots one dear image out.
Though thou art ever fair and kind,
The forests ever green,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
Than calm in waters seen.

WITH A GUITAR: TO JANE.



RIEL to Miranda. ... Take
This slave of Music, for the sake
Of him who is the slave of thee,
And teach it all the harmony
In which thou canst, & only thou,
Make the delighted spirit glow,
Till joy denies itself again,
And, too intense, is turned to pain;
For by permission and command
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,
Poor Ariel sends this silent token
Of more than ever can be spoken;
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who
From life to life must still pursue
Your happiness; for thus alone
Can Ariel ever find his own.
From Prospero's enchanted cell,
As the mighty verses tell,
To the throne of Naples, he
Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
Flitting on, your prow before,
Like a living meteor.
When you die, the silent Moon,
In her interlunar swoon,
Is not sadder in her cell
Than deserted Ariel.
When you live again on earth,
Like an unseen star of birth,
Ariel guides you o'er the sea

Of life from your nativity.
Many changes have been run
Since Ferdinand and you begun
Your course of love, and Ariel still
Has tracked your steps, and served your will;
Now in humbler, happier lot,
This is all remembered not;
And now, alas! the poor sprite is
Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
In a body like a grave;
From you, he only dares to crave,
For his service and his sorrow,
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep
The woods were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-swept Apennine;
And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
And some of Spring approaching fast,
And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,
And all of love; and so this tree,
Oh, that such our death may be!
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
To live in happier form again:
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
The artist wrought this loved Guitar,

And taught it justly to reply,
To all who question skilfully,
In language gentle as thine own;
Whispering in enamoured tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer winds in sylvan cells;
For it had learned all harmonies
Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voicèd fountains;
The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills,
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way.
All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well
The spirit that inhabits it;
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before
By those who tempt it to betray
These secrets of an elder day.
But, sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,

It keeps its highest, holiest tone
For our beloved Jane alone.

TO JANE.



HE keen stars were twinkling,
And the fair moon was rising among them,
Dear Jane!
The guitar was tinkling,
But the notes were not sweet till you sung them
Again.

As the moon's soft splendour
O'er the faint cold starlight of heaven
Is thrown,
So your voice most tender
To the strings without soul had then given
Its own.

The stars will awaken,
Though the moon sleep a full hour later
To-night;
No leaf will be shaken
Whilst the dews of your melody scatter
Delight.

Though the sound overpowers,
Sing again, with your dear voice revealing
A tone

To Jane

Of some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.

EPITAPH.

THESE are two friends whose lives were undivided;
So let their memory be, now they have glided
Under the grave; let not their bones be parted,
For their two hearts in life were single-hearted.

THE ISLE.



HERE was a little lawny islet
By anemone and violet,
Like mosaic, paven:
And its roof was flowers & leaves
Which the summer's breath enweaves,
Where nor sun nor showers nor breeze
Pierce the pines and tallest trees,
Each a gem engraven.
Girt by many an azure wave
With which the clouds and mountains pave
A lake's blue chasm.

A DIRGE.

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main,
Wail, for the world's wrong!

LINES WRITTEN IN THE BAY OF LERICI.

SHE left me at the silent time
When the moon had ceased to climb
The azure path of Heaven's steep,
And like an albatross asleep,
Balanced on her wings of light,
Hovered in the purple night,
Ere she sought her ocean nest
In the chambers of the West.
She left me, and I staid alone
Thinking over every tone
Which, though silent to the ear,
The enchanted heart could hear,
Like notes which die when born, but still
Haunt the echoes of the hill;
And feeling ever ... O too much!
The soft vibration of her touch,
As if her gentle hand, even now,

Lightly trembled on my brow;
And thus, although she absent were,
Memory gave me all of her
That even Fancy dares to claim:
Her presence had made weak and tame
All passions, and I lived alone
In the time which is our own;
The past and future were forgot,
As they had been, and would be, not.
But soon, the guardian angel gone,
The dæmon reassumed his throne
In my faint heart. I dare not speak
My thoughts, but thus disturbed and weak
I sat and saw the vessels glide
Over the ocean bright and wide,
Like spirit-wingèd chariots sent
O'er some serenest element
For ministrations strange and far;
As if to some Elysian star
They sailed for drink to medicine
Such sweet and bitter pain as mine.

And the wind that winged their flight
From the land came fresh and light,
And the scent of wingèd flowers,
And the coolness of the hours
Of dew, and sweet warmth left by day,
Were scattered o'er the twinkling bay.
And the fisher with his lamp
And spear about the low rocks damp

Crept, and struck the fish which came
To worship the delusive flame.
Too happy they, whose pleasure sought
Extinguishes all sense and thought
Of the regret that pleasure leaves,
Destroying life alone, not peace!

FRAGMENTS.

PRINCE ATHANASE.

Part I.



HERE was a youth,
who, as with toil & travel,
Had grown quite weak
and grey before his time;
Nor any could the restless
griefs unravel
Which burned within
him, withering up his
prime
And goading him, like
fiends, from land to land.
Not his the load of any secret crime,

For nought of ill his heart could understand,
But pity and wild sorrow for the same;
Not his the thirst for glory or command,

Baffled with blast of hope-consuming shame;
Nor evil joys which fire the vulgar breast
And quench in speedy smoke its feeble flame,

Had left within his soul their dark unrest;
Nor what religion fables of the grave
Feared he, Philosophy's accepted guest.

For none than he a purer heart could have,
Or that loved good more for itself alone;
Of nought in heaven or earth was he the slave.

What sorrow strange, and shadowy, & unknown,
Sent him, a hopeless wanderer, through mankind?
If with a human sadness he did groan,

He had a gentle yet aspiring mind;
Just, innocent, with varied learning fed;
And such a glorious consolation find

In others' joy, when all their own is dead.
He loved, and laboured for his kind in grief,
And yet, unlike all others, it is said,

That from such toil he never found relief;
Although a child of fortune and of power,
Of an ancestral name the orphan chief.

His soul had wedded wisdom, and her dower
Is love and justice, clothed in which he sate
Apart from men, as in a lonely tower,

Pitying the tumult of their dark estate:
Yet even in youth did he not e'er abuse
The strength of wealth or thought, to consecrate

Those false opinions which the harsh rich use
To blind the world they famish for their pride;
Nor did he hold from any man his dues,

But, like a steward in honest dealings tried
With those who toiled and wept, the poor & wise,
His riches and his cares he did divide.

Fearless he was, and scorning all disguise,
What he dared do or think, though men might start,
He spoke with mild yet unaverted eyes;

Liberal he was of soul, and frank of heart,
And to his many friends, all loved him well,
Whate'er he knew or felt he would impart,

If words he found those inmost thoughts to tell;
If not, he smiled or wept; and his weak foes
He neither spurned nor hated, though with fell

And mortal hate their thousand voices rose,
They passed like aimless arrows from his ear;
Nor did his heart or mind its portal close

To those, or them, or any whom life's sphere

May comprehend within its wide array.
What sadness made that vernal spirit sere?

He knew not. Though his life, day after day,
Was failing like an unreplenished stream,
Though in his eyes a cloud and burthen lay,

Through which his soul, like Vesper's serene beam
Piercing the chasms of ever rising clouds,
Shone, softly burning; though his lips did seem

Like reeds which quiver in impetuous floods;
And through his sleep, & o'er each waking hour,
Thoughts after thoughts, unresting multitudes,

Were driven within him by some secret power,
Which bade them blaze, and live, and roll afar,
Like lights & sounds, from haunted tower to tower

O'er castled mountains borne, when tempest's war
Is levied by the night-contending winds,
And the pale dalesmen watch with eager ear;

Though such were in his spirit, as the fiends
Which wake and feed on ever living woe,
What was this grief, which ne'er in other minds

A mirror found, he knew not, none could know;
But on whoe'er might question him he turned
The light of his frank eyes, as if to show

He knew not of the grief within that burned,
But asked forbearance with a mournful look;
Or spoke in words from which none ever learned

The cause of his disquietude; or shook
With spasms of silent passion; or turned pale:
So that his friends soon rarely undertook

To stir his secret pain without avail;
For all who knew and loved him then perceived
That there was drawn an adamantine veil

Between his heart and mind, both unrelieved
Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife.
Some said that he was mad, others believed

That memories of an antenatal life
Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell;
And others said that such mysterious grief

From God's displeasure, like a darkness, fell
On souls like his which owned no higher law
Than love; love calm, steadfast, invincible

By mortal fear or supernatural awe;
And others, "'Tis the shadow of a dream
Which the veiled eye of memory never saw,

"But through the soul's abyss, like some dark stream

Through shattered mines & caverns underground,
Rolls, shaking its foundations; and no beam

"Of joy may rise, but it is quenched and drowned
In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure,
Soon its exhausted waters will have found

"A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure,
O Athanase!... in one so good and great,
Evil or tumult cannot long endure."

So spake they: idly of another's state
Babbling vain words and fond philosophy;
This was their consolation; such debate

Men held with one another; nor did he,
Like one who labours with a human woe,
Decline this talk: as if its theme might be

Another, not himself, he to and fro
Questioned and canvassed it with subtlest wit,
And none but those who loved him best could know

That which he knew not, how it galled and bit
His weary mind, this converse vain and cold;
For like an eyeless nightmare grief did sit

Upon his being; a snake which fold by fold
Pressed out the life of life, a clinging fiend
Which clenched him if he stirred with deadlier hold,
And so his grief remained ... let it remain ... untold,

PRINCE Athanase had one be-
lovèd friend,
An old, old man, with hair of silver white,
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend

With his wise words, and eyes whose arrowy light
Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds.
He was the last whom superstition's blight

Had spared in Greece, the blight that cramps & blinds,
And in his olive bower at Œnoe
Had sate from earliest youth. Like one who finds

A fertile island in the barren sea,
One mariner who has survived his mates
Many a drear month in a great ship, so he

With soul-sustaining songs, and sweet debates
Of ancient lore, there fed his lonely being:
"The mind becomes that which it contemplates,"

And thus Zonoras, by for ever seeing
Their bright creations, grew like wisest men;
And when he heard the crash of nations fleeing

A bloodier power than ruled thy ruins then,
O sacred Hellas! many weary years
He wandered, till the path of Laian's glen

Was grass-grown, and the unremembered tears
Were dry in Laian for their honoured chief,
Who fell in Byzant, pierced by Moslem spears:

And as the lady looked with faithful grief
From her high lattice o'er the rugged path,
Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief

And blighting hope, who with the news of death
Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight,
She saw beneath the chestnuts, far beneath,

An old man toiling up, a weary wight;
And soon within her hospitable hall
She saw his white hairs glittering in the light

Of the wood-fire, and round his shoulders fall;
And his wan visage and his withered mien
Yet calm and gentle and majestical.

And Athanase, her child, who must have been
Then three years old, sate opposite and gazed
In patient silence.

. . . . . .

Such was Zonoras; and as daylight finds
One amaranth glittering on the path of frost,
When autumn nights have nipped all weaker kinds,

Thus through his age, dark, cold, and tempest-tost,

Shone truth upon Zonoras; and he filled
From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and lost,

The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child,
With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore
And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.

And sweet and subtle talk they evermore,
The pupil and the master, shared; until,
Sharing that undiminishable store,

The youth, as shadows on a grassy hill
Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran
His teacher, and did teach with native skill

Strange truths and new to that experienced man;
Still they were friends, as few have ever been
Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span.

So in the caverns of the forest green,
Or by the rocks of echoing ocean hoar,
Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen

By summer woodmen; and when winter's roar
Sounded o'er earth and sea its blast of war,
The Balearic fisher, driven from shore,

Hanging upon the peakèd wave afar,
Then saw their lamp from Laian's turret gleam,
Piercing the stormy darkness like a star

Which pours beyond the sea one steadfast beam,
Whilst all the constellations of the sky
Seemed reeling through the storm. They did but seem,

For, lo! the wintry clouds are all gone by,
And bright Arcturus through yon pines is glowing
And far o'er southern waves, immovably

Belted Orion hangs, warm light is flowing
From the young moon into the sunset's chasm.
"O, summer eve! with power divine, bestowing

"On thine own bird the sweet enthusiasm
Which overflows in notes of liquid gladness,
Filling the sky like light! How many a spasm

"Of fevered brains, oppressed with grief and madness,
Were lulled by thee, delightful nightingale!
And these soft waves, murmuring a gentle sadness,

"And the far sighings of yon piny dale
Made vocal by some wind we feel not here,
I bear alone what nothing may avail

"To lighten ... a strange load!" No human ear
Heard this lament; but o'er the visage wan
Of Athanase a ruffling atmosphere

Of dark emotion, a swift shadow, ran,
Like wind upon some forest-bosomed lake,
Glassy and dark. And that divine old man

Beheld his mystic friend's whole being shake,
Even where its inmost depths were gloomiest;
And with a calm and measured voice he spake,

And with a soft and equal pressure, pressed
That cold, lean hand: "Dost thou remember yet,
When the curved moon, then lingering in the west,

"Paused in yon waves her mighty horns to wet,
How in those beams we walked, half resting on the sea?
'Tis just one year, sure thou dost not forget,

"Then Plato's words of light in thee and me
Lingered like moonlight in the moonless east;
For we had just then read, thy memory

"Is faithful now, the story of the feast;
And Agathon and Diotima seemed
From death and dark forgetfulness released."
. . . . . .
'Twas at the season when the Earth upsprings
From slumber, as a spherèd angel's child,
Shadowing its eyes with green & golden wings,

Stands up before its mother bright and mild,
Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems;
So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,
The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove
Waxed green, and flowers burst forth like starry beams;

The grass in the warm sun did start and move,
And sea-buds burst beneath the waves serene:
How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen
In any mirror, or the spring's young minions,
The wingèd leaves amid the copses green;

How many a spirit then puts on the pinions
Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,
And his own steps, and over wide dominions

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,
More fleet than storms, the wide world shrinks below,
When winter and despondency are past.

'Twas at this season that Prince Athanase
Passed the white Alps; those eagle-baffling mountains
Slept in their shrouds of snow; beside the ways

The waterfalls were voiceless, for their fountains
Were changed to mines of sunless crystal now;
Or by the curdling winds, like brazen wings

Which clanged along the mountain's marble brow,
Warped into adamantine fretwork, hung,
And filled with frozen light the chasm below.

. . . . . .

Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all
We can desire, O Love! and happy souls,
Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

Catch thee, & feed from their o'erflowing bowls
Thousands who thirst for thy ambrosial dew;
Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investest it; and when the heavens are blue
Thou fillest them; and when the earth is fair
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear
Beauty like some bright robe; thou ever soarest
Among the towers of men, and as soft air

In spring, which moves the unawakened forest,
Clothing with leaves its branches bare & bleak,
Thou floatest among men; and aye implorest

That which from thee they should implore: the weak

Prince Athanase. Part II.

Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts
The strong have broken; yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not?

. . . . . .

Her hair was brown, her spherèd eyes were brown,
And in their dark and liquid moisture swam,
Like the dim orb of the eclipsèd moon;

Yet when the spirit flashed beneath, there came
The light from them, as when tears of delight
Double the western planet's serene flame.

THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

A WOODMAN, whose rough heart was out of tune
(I think such hearts yet never came to good),
Hated to hear, under the stars or moon,

One nightingale in an interfluous wood
Satiate the hungry dark with melody;
And as a vale is watered by a flood,

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
Struggling with darkness, as a tuberose
Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose,
The singing of that happy nightingale
In this sweet forest, from the golden close

Of evening, till the star of dawn may fail,
Was interfused upon the silentness;
The folded roses and the violets pale

Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss
Of heaven with all its planets; the dull ear
Of the night-cradled earth; the loneliness

Of the circumfluous waters; every sphere
And every flower and beam and cloud and wave,
And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

And every beast stretched in its rugged cave,
And every bird lulled on its mossy bough,
And every silver moth fresh from the grave

Which is its cradle, ever from below
Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,
To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproachèd star,
As if it were a lamp of earthly light,
Unconscious, as some human lovers are,

Itself how low, how high beyond all height
The heaven where it would perish! and every form
That worshipped in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm
Girt as with an interminable zone,
Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion
Out of their dreams; harmony became love
In every soul but one.

. . . . . .

And so this man returned with axe and saw
At evening close from killing the tall treen,
The soul of whom by nature's gentle law

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green
The pavement and the roof of the wild copse,
Checkering the sunlight of the blue serene

With jagged leaves, and from the forest tops
Singing the winds to sleep, or weeping oft
Fast showers of aërial water drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft,
Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness;
Around the cradles of the birds aloft

They spread themselves into the loveliness
Of fan-like leaves, and over pallid flowers
Hang like moist clouds; or, where high branches kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers,

Like a vast fane in a metropolis,
Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like traceries
In which there is religion, and the mute
Persuasion of unkindled melodies,

Odours & gleams and murmurs, which the lute
Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast
Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,

Wakening the leaves and waves ere it has past
To such brief unison as on the brain
One tone, which never can recur, has cast,

One accent never to return again.
. . . . . .
The world is full of Woodmen who expel
Love's gentle Dryads from the haunts of life,
And vex the nightingales in every dell.

OTHO.

THOU wert not, Cassius, and thou couldst not be,
Last of the Romans, though thy memory claim
From Brutus his own glory, and on thee
Rests the full splendour of his sacred fame;
Nor he who dared make the foul tyrant quail

Otho Amid his cowering senate with thy name,
Though thou and he were great; it will avail
To thine own fame that Otho's should not fail.

'Twill wrong thee not... thou wouldst, if thou couldst feel,
Abjure such envious fame; great Otho died
Like thee, he sanctified his country's steel,
At once the tyrant and tyrannicide,
In his own blood. A deed it was to bring
Tears from all men, though full of gentle pride,
Such pride as from impetuous love may spring,
That will not be refused its offering.

Those whom nor power, nor lying faith, nor toil
Nor custom, queen of many slaves makes blind,
Have ever grieved that man should be the spoil
Of his own weakness, and with earnest mind
Fed hopes of its redemption, these recur
Chastened by deathful victory now, and find
Foundations in this foulest age, and stir
Me whom they cheer to be their minister.

Dark is the realm of grief: but human things
Those may not know who cannot weep for them.
. . . . . .
Once more descend
The shadows of my soul upon mankind,
For to those hearts with which they never blend,
Thoughts are but shadows which the flashing mind

From the swift clouds which track its flight of fire
Casts on the gloomy world it leaves behind.

. . . . . .

TASSO.

Maddalo, a Courtier. Pigna, a Minister.
Malpiglio, a Poet. Albano, an Usher.

Maddalo  O access to the Duke! You have not said
That the Count Maddalo would speak with him?
Pigna. Did you inform his Grace that Signor Pigna
Waits with state papers for his signature?
Malpiglio. The Lady Leonora cannot know
That I have written a sonnet to her fame,
In which I Venus and Adonis.
You should not take my gold and serve me not.
Albano In truth I told her, and she smiled and said,
"If I am Venus, thou, coy Poesy,
Art the Adonis whom I love, and he
The Erymanthian boar that wounded him."
Oh, trust to me, Signor Malpiglio,
Those nods and smiles were favours worth the zechin.
Malpiglio The words are twisted in some double sense
That I reach not: the smiles fell not on me.

Pigna How are the Duke and Duchess occupied?
Albano Buried in some strange talk. The Duke was leaning,
His finger on his brow, his lips unclosed.
The Princess sate within the window-seat,
And so her face was hid; but on her knee
Her hands were clasped, veinèd, and pale as snow,
And quivering; young Tasso, too, was there.
Maddalo Thou seest on whom from thine own worshipped heaven
Thou drawest down smiles, they did not rain on thee.
Malpiglio Would they were parching lightnings for his sake
On whom they fell!

. . . . . .

SONG.

I LOVED ... alas! our life is love;
But when we cease to breathe and move
I do suppose love ceases too.
I thought, but not as now I do,
Keen thoughts and bright of linkèd lore,
Of all that men had thought before,
And all that nature shows, and more.

And still I love and still I think,
But strangely, for my heart can drink
The dregs of such despair, and live,
And love;
And if I think, my thoughts come fast,

I mix the present with the past,
And each seems uglier than the last.

Sometimes I see before me flee
A silver spirit's form, like thee,
O Leonora, and I sit
still watching it,
Till by the grated casement's ledge
It fades, with such a sigh, as sedge
Breathes o'er the breezy streamlet's edge.

MARENGHI.



ET those who pine in
pride or in revenge,
Or think that ill for ill
should be repaid,
Or barter wrong for wrong,
until the exchange
Ruins the merchants of
such thriftless trade,
Visit the tower of Vado,
and unlearn
Such bitter faith beside Marenghi's urn.

A massy tower yet overhangs the town,
A scattered group of ruined dwellings now.
. . . . . .

Another scene ere wise Etruria knew
Its second ruin through internal strife,

Marenghi

And tyrants through the breach of discord threw
The chain which binds and kills. As death to life,
As winter to fair flowers (though some be poison)
So Monarchy succeeds to Freedom's foison.

In Pisa's church a cup of sculptured gold
Was brimming with the blood of feuds forsworn
At sacrament: more holy ne'er of old
Etrurians mingled with the shades forlorn
Of moon-illumined forests.

. . . . . .

And reconciling factions wet their lips
With that dread wine, & swear to keep each spirit
Undarkened by their country's last eclipse.

. . . . . .

Was Florence the liberticide? that band
Of free and glorious brothers who had planted,
Like a green isle 'mid Æthiopian sand,
A nation amid slaveries, disenchanted
Of many impious faiths... wise, just... do they,
Does Florence, gorge the sated tyrants' prey?

O foster-nurse of man's abandoned glory,
Since Athens, its great mother, sunk in splendour
Thou shadowest forth that mighty shape in story
As ocean its wrecked fanes, severe yet tender:
The light-invested angel Poesy
Was drawn from the dim world to welcome thee.

And thou in painting didst transcribe all taught
By loftiest meditations; marble knew
The sculptor's fearless soul, and as he wrought,
The grace of his own power and freedom grew.
And more than all, heroic, just, sublime,
Thou wert among the false; was this thy crime?

Yes; and on Pisa's marble walls the twine
Of direst weeds hangs garlanded; the snake
Inhabits its wrecked palaces; in thine
A beast of subtler venom now doth make
Its lair, and sits amid their glories overthrown,
And thus thy victim's fate is as thine own.

The sweetest flowers are ever frail and rare,
And love and freedom blossom but to wither;
And good and ill like vines entangled are,
So that their grapes may oft be plucked together;
Divide the vintage ere thou drink, then make
Thy heart rejoice for dead Marenghi's sake.

No record of his crime remains in story,
But if the morning bright as evening shone,
It was some high and holy deed, by glory
Pursued into forgetfulness, which won
From the blind crowd he made secure and free
The patriot's meed, toil, death, and infamy.

For when by sound of trumpet was declared
A price upon his life, and there was set

Marenghi A penalty of blood on all who shared
So much of water with him as might wet
His lips, which speech divided not, he went
Alone, as you may guess, to banishment.

Amid the mountains, like a hunted beast,
He hid himself, and hunger, toil, and cold,
Month after month endured; it was a feast
Whene'er he found those globes of deep-red gold
Which in the woods the strawberry-tree doth bear,
Suspended in their emerald atmosphere.

And in the roofless huts of vast morasses,
Deserted by the fever-stricken serf,
All overgrown with reeds and long rank grasses,
And hillocks heaped of moss-inwoven turf,
And where the huge and speckled aloe made,
Rooted in stones, a broad and pointed shade,

He housed himself. There is a point of strand
Near Vado's tower and town; and on one side
The treacherous marsh divides it from the land,
Shadowed by pine and ilex forests wide,
And on the other creeps eternally,
Through muddy weeds, the shallow sullen sea.

Here the earth's breath is pestilence, and few
But things whose nature is at war with life,
Snakes and ill worms, endure its mortal dew.

The trophies of the clime's victorious strife,
White bones, and locks of dun and yellow hair,
And ringèd horns which buffaloes did wear.
. . . . . .

And at the utmost point stood there
The relics of a weed-inwoven cot,
Thatched with broad flags. An outlawed murderer
Had lived seven days there: the pursuit was hot
When he was cold. The birds that were his grave
Fell dead upon their feast in Vado's wave.

There must have lived within Marenghi's heart
That fire, more warm & bright than life or hope,
(Which to the martyr makes his dungeon....
More joyous than the heaven's majestic cope
To his oppressor), warring with decay,
Or he could ne'er have lived years, day by day.

Nor was his state so lone as you might think.
He had tamed every newt and snake and toad,
And every seagull which sailed down to drink
Those ere the death-mist went abroad.
And each one, with peculiar talk and play,
Wiled, not untaught, his silent time away.

And the marsh-meteors, like tame beasts, at night
Came licking with blue tongues his veinèd feet;
And he would watch them, as, like spirits bright,
In many entangled figures quaint and sweet

Marenghi

To some enchanted music they would dance,
Until they vanished at the first moon-glance.

He mocked the stars by grouping on each weed
The summer dewdrops in the golden dawn;
And, ere the hoarfrost vanished, he could read
Its pictured footprints, as on spots of lawn
Its delicate brief touch in silence weaves
The likeness of the wood's remembered leaves.

And many a fresh Spring morn would he awaken,
While yet the unrisen sun made glow, like iron
Quivering in crimson fire, the peaks unshaken
Of mountains and blue isles which did environ
With air-clad crags that plain of land and sea,
And feel liberty.

And in the moonless nights, when the dim ocean
Heaved underneath the heaven, ...
Starting from dreams ....
Communed with the immeasurable world;
And felt his life beyond his limbs dilated,
Till his mind grew like that it contemplated.

His food was the wild fig and strawberry;
The milky pine-nuts which the autumnal blast
Shakes into the tall grass; and such small fry
As from the sea by winter-storms are cast;
And the coarse bulbs of iris-flowers he found
Knotted in clumps under the spongy ground.

And so were kindled powers and thoughts which made
His solitude less dark. When memory came
(For years gone by leave each a deepening shade),
His spirit basked in its internal flame,
As, when the black storm hurries round at night
The fisher basks beside his red firelight.

Yet human hopes and cares and faiths and errors,
Like billows unawakened by the wind,
Slept in Marenghi still; but that all terrors,
Weakness, and doubt, had withered in his mind.
His couch

. . . . . .

And, when he saw beneath the sunset's planet
A black ship walk over the crimson ocean,
Its pennons streaming on the blasts that fan it,
Its sails and ropes all tense and without motion,
Like the dark ghost of the unburied even
Striding across the orange-coloured heaven,

The thought of his own kind who made the soul
Which sped that wingèd shape through night and day,
The thought of his own country ....

LINES WRITTEN FOR PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.



S a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky,
Until its hue grows like what it beholds;
As a grey and empty mist
Lies like solid amethyst
Over the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow;
As a strain of sweetest sound
Wraps itself the wind around,
Until the voiceless wind be music too;
As aught dark, vain, and dull,
Basking in what is beautiful,
Is full of light and love.

ORPHEUS.

A 

OT far from hence.
From yonder pointed hill,
Crowned with a ring of oaks,
you may behold
A dark and barren field, through which there flows,
Sluggish and black, a deep but narrow stream,

Which the wind ripples not, and the fair moon
Gazes in vain, and finds no mirror there.
Follow the herbless banks of that strange brook
Until you pause beside a darksome pond,
The fountain of this rivulet, whose gush
Cannot be seen, hid by a rayless night
That lives beneath the overhanging rock
That shades the pool, an endless spring of gloom,
Upon whose edge hovers the tender light,
Trembling to mingle with its paramour,
But, as Syrinx fled Pan, so night flies day,
Or, with most sullen and regardless hate,
Refuses stern her heaven-born embrace.
On one side of this jagged and shapeless hill
There is a cave, from which there eddies up
A pale mist, like aërial gossamer,
Whose breath destroys all life; awhile it veils
The rock; then, scattered by the wind, it flies
Along the stream, or lingers on the clefts,
Killing the sleepy worms, if aught bide there.
Upon the beetling edge of that dark rock
There stands a group of cypresses; not such
As, with a graceful spire and stirring life,
Pierce the pure heaven of your native vale,
Whose branches the air plays among, but not
Disturbs, fearing to spoil their solemn grace;
But blasted and all wearily they stand,
One to another clinging; their weak boughs
Sigh as the wind buffets them, and they shake
Beneath its blasts, a weather-beaten crew!

Orpheus

Chorus What wondrous sound is that, mournful & faint,
But more melodious than the murmuring wind
Which through the columns of a temple glides?

A It is the wandering voice of Orpheus' lyre,
Borne by the winds, who sigh that their rude king
Hurries them fast from these air-feeding notes;
But in their speed they bear along with them
The waning sound, scattering it like dew
Upon the startled sense.

Chorus Does he still sing?
Methought he rashly cast away his harp
When he had lost Eurydice.

A Ah no!
Awhile he paused. As a poor hunted stag
A moment shudders on the fearful brink
Of a swift stream, the cruel hounds press on
With deafening yell, the arrows glance & wound,
He plunges in: so Orpheus, seized and torn
By the sharp fangs of an insatiate grief,
Mænad-like waved his lyre in the bright air,
And wildly shrieked, "Where she is, it is dark!"
And then he struck from forth the strings a sound
Of deep and fearful melody. Alas!
In times long past, when fair Eurydice
With her bright eyes sat listening by his side,
He gently sang of high and heavenly themes.
As in a brook, fretted with little waves,

By the light airs of spring, each riplet makes
A many-sided mirror for the sun,
While it flows musically through green banks,
Ceaseless and pauseless, ever clear and fresh,
So flowed his song, reflecting the deep joy
And tender love that fed those sweetest notes,
The heavenly offspring of ambrosial food.
But that is past. Returning from drear Hell,
He chose a lonely seat of unhewn stone,
Blackened with lichens, on a herbless plain.
Then from the deep and overflowing spring
Of his eternal, ever-moving grief
There rose to Heaven a sound of angry song.
'Tis as a mighty cataract that parts
Two sister rocks with waters swift and strong,
And casts itself with horrid roar and din
Adown a steep; from a perennial source
It ever flows and falls, and breaks the air
With loud and fierce, but most harmonious roar,
And as it falls casts up a vaporous spray
Which the sun clothes in hues of Iris light.
Thus the tempestuous torrent of his grief
Is clothed in sweetest sounds and varying words
Of poesy. Unlike all human works,
It never slackens, and through every change
Wisdom and beauty and the power divine
Of mighty poesy together dwell,
Mingling in sweet accord. As I have seen
A fierce south blast tear through the darkened sky,
Driving along a rack of wingèd clouds,

Orpheus Which may not pause, but ever hurry on,
As their wild shepherd wills them, while the stars,
Twinkling and dim, peep from between the plumes.
Anon the sky is cleared, and the high dome
Of serene Heaven, starred with fiery flowers,
Shuts in the shaken earth; or the still moon
Swiftly, yet gracefully, begins her walk,
Rising all bright behind the eastern hills.
I talk of moon, and wind, and stars, and not
Of song; but, would I echo his high song,
Nature must lend me words ne'er used before,
Or I must borrow from her perfect works,
To picture forth his perfect attributes.
He does no longer sit upon his throne
Of rock upon a desert herbless plain,
For the evergreen and knotted ilexes,
And cypresses that seldom wave their boughs,
And sea-green olives with their grateful fruit,
And elms dragging along the twisted vines,
Which drop their berries as they follow fast,
And blackthorn bushes with their infant race
Of blushing rose blooms; beeches, to lovers dear,
And weeping willow trees; all swift or slow,
As their huge boughs or lighter dress permit,
Have circled in his throne; and Earth herself
Has sent from her maternal breast a growth
Of starlike flowers and herbs of odour sweet,
To pave the temple that his poesy
Has framed, while near his feet grim lions couch,
And kids, fearless from love, creep near his lair.

Even the blind worms seem to feel the sound.
The birds are silent, hanging down their heads,
Perched on the lowest branches of the trees;
Not even the nightingale intrudes a note
In rivalry, but all entranced she listens.

FIORDISPINA.



HE season was the childhood of sweet June,
Whose sunny hours from morning until noon
Went creeping through the day with silent feet,
Each with its load of pleasure, slow yet sweet;
Like the long years of blest Eternity
Never to be developed. Joy to thee,
Fiordispina, and thy Cosimo,
For thou the wonders of the depth canst know
Of this unfathomable flood of hours,
Sparkling beneath the heaven which embowers...
. . . . . .
They were two cousins, almost like twins,
Except that from the catalogue of sins
Nature had rased their love, which could not be
But by dissevering their nativity.
And so they grew together like two flowers
Upon one stem, which the same beams & showers
Lull or awaken in their purple prime,
Which the same hand will gather, the same clime
Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see

Fiordis-
pina

All those who love... & who e'er loved like thee,
Fiordispina? Scarcely Cosimo,
Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow
The ardours of a vision which obscure
The very idol of its portraiture.
He faints, dissolved into a sea of love;
But thou art as a planet sphered above;
But thou art Love itself, ruling the motion
Of his subjected spirit: such emotion
Must end in sin or sorrow, if sweet May
Had not brought forth this morn, your wedding-
day.

. . . . . .

"Lie there; sleep awhile in your own dew,
Ye faint-eyed children of the Hours,"
Fiordispina said, and threw the flowers
Which she had from the breathing...

. . . . . .

A table near of polished porphyry.
They seemed to wear a beauty from the eye
That looked on them, a fragrance from the touch
Whose warmth checked their life; a light such
As sleepers wear, lulled by the voice they love,
which did reprove
The childish pity that she felt for them,
And a remorse that from their stem
She had divided such fair shapes made
A feeling in the which was a shade
Of gentle beauty on the flowers: there lay

All gems that make the earth's dark bosom gay. Fiordis-
rods of myrtle-buds and lemon-blooms, pina
And that leaf tinted lightly which assumes
The livery of unremembered snow...
Violets whose eyes have drunk...
. . . . . .
Fiordispina and her nurse are now
Upon the steps of the high portico;
Under the withered arm of Media
She flings her glowing arm
. . . . . .
step by step and stair by stair,
That withered woman, grey and white & brown,
More like a trunk by lichens overgrown
Than anything which once could have been
human.
And ever as she goes the palsied woman
. . . . . .
"How slow and painfully you seem to walk,
Poor Media! you tire yourself with talk."
"And well it may,
Fiordispina, dearest... well-a-day!
You are hastening to a marriage-bed;
I to the grave!" "And if my love were dead,
Unless my heart deceives me, I would lie
Beside him in my shroud as willingly
As now in the gay night-dress Lilla wrought."
"Fie, child! Let that unseasonable thought
Not be remembered till it snows in June;
Such fancies are a music out of tune

Fiordis-
pina

With the sweet dance your heart must keep to-
night.
What! would you take all beauty and delight
Back to the Paradise from which you sprung,
And leave to grosser mortals?
And say, sweet lamb, would you not learn the
sweet
And subtle mystery by which spirits meet?
Who knows whether the loving game is played,
When, once of mortal disarrayed,
The naked soul goes wandering here and there
Through the wide deserts of Elysian air?
The violet dies not till it" ...

THE BIRTH OF PLEASURE.

AT the creation of the Earth
Pleasure, that divinest birth,
From the soil of Heaven did rise,
Wrapt in sweet wild melodies,
Like an exhalation wreathing
To the sound of air low-breathing
Through Æolian pines, which make
A shade and shelter to the lake
Whence it rises soft and slow;
Her life-breathing did flow
In the harmony divine
Of an ever-lengthening line
Which enwrapped her perfect form
With a beauty clear and warm.

. . . . . .



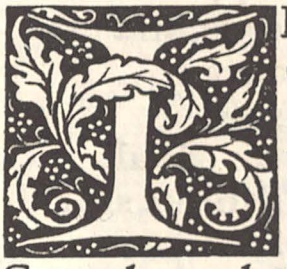
ND many there were hurt by
that strong boy;
His name, they said, was Pleasure,
And near him stood, glorious
beyond measure,
Four Ladies who possess all
empery
In earth and air and sea;
Nothing that lives from their award is free.
Their names will I declare to thee,
Love, Hope, Desire, and Fear,
And they the regents are
Of the four elements that frame the heart,
And each diversely exercised her art
By force or circumstance or sleight
To prove her dreadful might
Upon that poor domain.
Desire presented her glass, and then
The spirit dwelling there
Was spell-bound to embrace what seemed so fair
Within that magic mirror,
And, dazed by that bright error,
It would have scorned the of the avenger,
And death, and penitence, and danger,
Had not then silent Fear
Touched with her palsying spear,
So that, as if a frozen torrent,
The blood was curdled in its current;

Love,
Hope,
Desire,
and Fear

It dared not speak, even in look or motion,
But chained within itself its proud devotion.
Between Desire and Fear thou wert
A wretched thing, poor heart!
Sad was his life who bore thee in his breast,
Wild bird for that weak nest.
Till Love even from fierce Desire it bought,
And from the very wound of tender thought
Drew solace, and the pity of sweet eyes
Gave strength to bear those gentle agonies,
Surmount the loss, the terror, and the sorrow.
Then Hope approached, she who can borrow
For poor to-day, from rich to-morrow;
And Fear withdrew, as night when day
Descends upon the orient ray,
And after long and vain endurance
The poor heart woke to her assurance.

At one birth these four were born
With the world's forgotten morn,
And from Pleasure still they hold
All it circles, as of old.
When, as summer lures the swallow,
Pleasure lures the heart to follow,
O weak heart of little wit!
The fair hand that wounded it,
Seeking, like a panting hare,
Refuge in the lynx's lair,
Love, Desire, Hope, and Fear,
Ever will be near.

A SATIRE ON SATIRE.



F gibbets, axes, confiscations, chains,
And racks of subtle torture, if the pains
Of shame, of fiery Hell's tempestuous wave,
Seen through the caverns of the shadowy grave,
Hurling the damned into the murky air
While the meek blest sit smiling; if Despair
And Hate, the rapid bloodhounds with which Terror
Hunts through the world the homeless steps of Error,
Are the true secrets of the commonweal
To make men wise and just; ....
And not the sophisms of revenge and fear,
Bloodier than is revenge ....
Then send the priests to every hearth and home
To preach the burning wrath which is to come,
In words like flakes of sulphur, such as thaw
The frozen tears ....
If Satire's scourge could wake the slumbering hounds
Of Conscience, or erase the deeper wounds,
The leprous scars of callous infamy;
If it could make the present not to be,
Or charm the dark past never to have been,
Or turn regret to hope; who that has seen
What Southey is and was, would not exclaim,

A Satire on Satire

Lash on! be the keen verse dipped in flame;
Follow his flight with wingèd words, and urge
The strokes of the inexorable scourge
Until the heart be naked, till his soul
See the contagion's spots foul;
And from the mirror of Truth's sunlike shield,
From which his Parthian arrow....
Flash on his sight the spectres of the past,
Until his mind's eye paint thereon...
Let scorn like yawn below,
And rain on him like flakes of fiery snow.
This cannot be, it ought not, evil still...
Suffering makes suffering, ill must follow ill.
Rough words beget sad thoughts, and, beside,
Men take a sullen and a stupid pride
In being all they hate in others' shame,
By a perverse antipathy of fame.
'Tis not worth while to prove, as I could, how
From the sweet fountains of our Nature flow
These bitter waters; I will only say,
If any friend would take Southey some day,
And tell him, in a country walk alone,
Softening harsh words with friendship's gentle tone,
How incorrect his public conduct is,
And what men think of it, 'twere not amiss.
Far better than to make innocent ink...

GINEVRA.



ILD, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one
Who staggers forth into the air and sun
From the dark chamber of a mortal fever,
Bewildered, and incapable, and ever
Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain
Of usual shapes, till the familiar train
Of objects and of persons past like things
Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,
Ginevra from the nuptial altar went;
The vows to which her lips had sworn assent
Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,
Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,
Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale,
And deepened the faint crimson of her mouth,
And darkened her dark locks, as moonlight doth,
And of the gold and jewels glittering there
She scarce felt conscious, but the weary glare
Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,
Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight.
A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud
Was less heavenly fair, her face was bowed,
And as she passed, the diamonds in her hair

Were mirrored in the polished marble stair
Which led from the cathedral to the street;
And even as she went her light fair feet
Erased these images.

The bride-maidens who round her thronging came,
Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame,
Envying the unenviable; and others
Making the joy which should have been another's
Their own by gentle sympathy; and some
Sighing to think of an unhappy home;
Some few admiring what can ever lure
Maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure
Of parents' smiles for life's great cheat; a thing
Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining.

But they are all dispersed... and lo! she stands
Looking in idle grief on her white hands,
Alone within the garden now her own;
And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,
The music of the merry marriage-bells,
Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells;
Absorbed like one within a dream who dreams
That he is dreaming, until slumber seems
A mockery of itself; when suddenly
Antonio stood before her, pale as she.
With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,
He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,
And said, "Is this thy faith?" and then as one

Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun
With light like a harsh voice, which bids him rise
And look upon his day of life with eyes
Which weep in vain that they can dream no more,
Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore
To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling blood
Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued
Said, "Friend, if earthly violence or ill,
Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will
Of parents, chance, or custom, time or change,
Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,
Or wildered looks, or words, or evil speech,
With all their stings and venom, can impeach
Our love, we love not: if the grave, which hides
The victim from the tyrant, and divides
The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart
Imperious inquisition to the heart
That is another's, could dissever ours,
We love not." ... "What! do not the silent hours
Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed?
Is not that ring" ... a pledge, he would have said,
Of broken vows, but she with patient look
The golden circle from her finger took,
And said, "Accept this token of my faith,
The pledge of vows to be absolved by death;
And I am dead or shall be soon, my knell
Will mix its music with that merry bell;
Does it not sound as if they sweetly said,
'We toll a corpse out of the marriage-bed'?
The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn

Ginevra Will serve unfaded for my bier, so soon,
That even the dying violet will not die
Before Ginevra." The strong fantasy
Had made her accents weaker and more weak,
And quenched the crimson life upon her cheek,
And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere
Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear,
Making her but an image of the thought,
Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought
News of the terrors of the coming time.
Like an accuser branded with the crime
He would have cast on a belovèd friend,
Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end
The pale betrayer, he then with vain repentance
Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence.
Antonio stood and would have spoken, when
The compound voice of women and of men
Was heard approaching; he retired, while she
Was led amid the admiring company
Back to the palace, and her maidens soon
Changed her attire for the afternoon,
And left her at her own request to keep
An hour of quiet and rest: like one asleep
With open eyes and folded hands she lay,
Pale in the light of the declining day.

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,
And in the lighted hall the guests are met;
The beautiful looked lovelier in the light

Of love, and admiration, and delight,
Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes
Kindling a momentary Paradise.
This crowd is safer than the silent wood,
Where love's own doubts disturb the solitude;
On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine
Falls, and the dew of music more divine
Tempers the deep emotions of the time
To spirits cradled in a sunny clime:
How many meet, who never yet have met,
To part too soon, but never to forget.
How many saw the beauty, power, and wit
Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet;
But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn.
As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn,
And unprophetic of the coming hours,
The matin winds from the expanded flowers
Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken
The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken
From every living heart which it possesses,
Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses,
As if the future and the past were all
Treasured i' the instant; so Gherardi's hall
Laughed in the mirth of its lord's festival,
Till some one asked, "Where is the Bride?"
And then
A bridesmaid went, and ere she came again
A silence fell upon the guests, a pause
Of expectation, as when beauty awes
All hearts with its approach, though unbeheld;

Then wonder, & then fear that wonder quelled;
For whispers passed from mouth to ear which drew
The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and flew
Louder and swifter round the company;
And then Gherardi entered with an eye
Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd
Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

They found Ginevra dead! if it be death
To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,
With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white,
And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light
Mocked at the speculation they had owned.
If it be death, when there is felt around
A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,
And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair
From the scalp to the ankles, as it were
Corruption from the spirit passing forth,
And giving all it shrouded to the earth,
And leaving as swift lightning in its flight
Ashes, and smoke, and darkness: in our night
Of thought we know thus much of death, no more
Than the unborn dream of our life before
Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore.

The marriage feast and its solemnity
Was turned to funeral pomp; the company,
With heavy hearts and looks, broke up; nor they

Who loved the dead went weeping on their way
Alone, but sorrow mixed with sad surprise
Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes,
On which that form, whose fate they weep in vain,
Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again.
The lamps which, half-extinguished in their haste
Gleamed few and faint o'er the abandoned feast,
Showed as it were within the vaulted room
A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom
Had past out of men's minds into the air.
Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,
Friends and relations of the dead, and he,
A loveless man, accepted torpidly
The consolation that he wanted not;
Awe in the place of grief within him wrought.
Their whispers made the solemn silence seem
More still ... some wept,
Some melted into tears without a sob,
And some with hearts that might be heard to throb
Leaned on the table, and at intervals
Shuddered to hear through the deserted halls
And corridors the thrilling shrieks which came
Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame
Of every torch and taper, as it swept
From out the chamber where the women kept;
Their tears fell on the dear companion cold
Of pleasures now departed; then was knolled
The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived,
And finding death their penitent had shrived,
Returned like ravens from a corpse whereon

Ginevra A vulture has just feasted to the bone.
And then the mourning-women came.

. . . . . .

THE DIRGE.

OLD winter was gone
In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,
And the spring came down
From the planet that hovers upon the shore
Where the sea of sunlight encroaches
On the limits of wintry night;
If the land, and the air, and the sea,
Rejoice not when spring approaches,
We did not rejoice in thee,
Ginevra!

She is still, she is cold,
On the bridal couch.
One step to the white death-bed,
And one to the bier,
And one to the charnel... and one, O where?
The dark arrow fled
In the noon.

Ere the sun through heaven once more has rolled,
The rats in her heart
Will have made their nest,
And the worms be alive in her golden hair,
While the spirit that guides the sun
Sits throned in his flaming chair,
She shall sleep.

THE BOAT ON THE SERCHIO.



UR boat is asleep on Serchio's stream,
Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,
The helm sways idly, hither and thither;
Dominic, the boatman, has brought the mast,
And the oars, and the sails; but 'tis sleeping fast
Like a beast, unconscious of its tether.

The stars burned out in the pale blue air,
And the thin white moon lay withering there;
To tower, and cavern, and rift, and tree,
The owl and the bat fled drowsily.
Day had kindled the dewy woods,
And the rocks above and the stream below,
And the vapours in their multitudes,
And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow,
And clothed with light of aëry gold
The mists in their eastern caves uprolled.

Day had awakened all things that be,
The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,
And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
And the matin-bell and the mountain bee:
Fire-flies were quenched on the dewy corn;
Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,
Like lamps which a student forgets to trim:
The beetle forgot to wind his horn,

The crickets were still in the meadow and hill:
Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun,
Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
Fled from the brains which are their prey
From the lamp's death to the morning ray.

All rose to do the task He set to each,
Who shaped us to his ends and not our own;
The million rose to learn, and one to teach
What none yet ever knew or can be known.
And many rose
Whose woe was such that fear became desire;
Melchior and Lionel were not among those;
They from the throng of men had stepped aside,
And made their home under the green hillside.
It was that hill, whose intervening brow
Screens Lucca from the Pisan's envious eye,
Which the circumfluous plain waving below,
Like a wide lake of green fertility,
With streams and fields and marshes bare,
Divides from the far Apennines, which lie
Islanded in the immeasurable air.

"What think you, as she lies in her green cove,
Our little sleeping boat is dreaming of?
If morning dreams are true, why I should guess
That she was dreaming of our idleness,
And of the miles of watery way
We should have led her by this time of day."
"Never mind," said Lionel,

"Give care to the winds, they can bear it well
About yon poplar tops; and see!
The white clouds are driving merrily,
And the stars we miss this morn will light
More willingly our return to-night.
How it whistles, Dominic's long black hair!
List, my dear fellow; the breeze blows fair:
Hear how it sings into the air.
Of us and of our lazy motions,"
Impatiently said Melchior,
"If I can guess a boat's emotions;
And how we ought, two hours before,
To have been the devil knows where."
And then, in such transalpine Tuscan
As would have killed a Della-Cruscan,

. . . . . .

So, Lionel according to his art
Weaving his idle words, Melchior said:
"She dreams that we are not yet out of bed;
We'll put a soul into her, and a heart
Which like a dove chased by a dove shall beat."

. . . . . .

"Ay, heave the ballast overboard,
And stow the eatables in the aft locker."
"Would not this keg be best a little lowered?"
"No, now all's right." Those bottles of warm tea...
Give me some straw ... must be stowed tenderly;
Such as we used, in summer after six,
To cram in great-coat pockets, and to mix

Hard eggs and radishes and rolls at Eton,
And, couched on stolen hay in those green harbours
Farmers called gaps, & we schoolboys called arbours,
Would feast till eight."

. . . . . .

With a bottle in one hand,
As if his very soul were at a stand,
Lionel stood, when Melchior brought him steady,
"Sit at the helm, fasten this sheet, all ready!"

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,
The living breath is fresh behind,
As with dews and sunrise fed,
Comes the laughing morning wind;
The sails are full, the boat makes head
Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,
Then flags with intermitting course,
And hangs upon the wave, and stems
The tempest of the....
Which fervid from its mountain source
Shallow, smooth and strong doth come,...
Swift as fire, tempestuously
It sweeps into the affrighted sea;
In morning's smile its eddies coil,
Its billows sparkle, toss and boil,
Torturing all its quiet light
Into columns fierce and bright.

The Serchio, twisting forth

Between the marble barriers which it clove
At Ripafratta, leads through the dread chasm
The wave that died the death which lovers love,
Living in what it sought; as if this spasm
Had not yet past, the toppling mountains cling,
But the clear stream in full enthusiasm
Pours itself on the plain, then wandering,
Down one clear path of effluence crystalline,
Sends its superfluous waves, that they may fling
At Arno's feet tribute of corn and wine;
Then, through the pestilential deserts wild
Of tangled marsh and woods of stunted pine,
It rushes to the Ocean.

THE ZUCCA.

SUMMER was dead and Autumn was expiring,
And infant Winter laughed upon the land
All cloudlessly and cold; when I, desiring
More in this world than any understand,
Wept o'er the beauty, which, like sea retiring,
Had left the earth bare as the wave-worn sand
Of my lorn heart, and o'er the grass and flowers
Pale for the falsehood of the flattering hours.

Summer was dead, but I yet lived to weep
The instability of all but weeping;
And on the Earth lulled in her winter sleep

I woke, and envied her as she was sleeping.
Too happy Earth! over thy face shall creep
The wakening vernal airs, until thou, leaping
From unremembered dreams shalt see
No death divide thy immortality.

I loved... O, no, I mean not one of ye,
Or any earthly one, though ye are dear
As human heart to human heart may be;
I loved, I know not what... but this low sphere,
And all that it contains, contains not thee,
Thou, whom seen nowhere, I feel everywhere.
From heaven and earth, and all that in them are
Veiled art thou like a star.

By Heaven and Earth, from all whose shapes thou flowest,
Neither to be contained, delayed, nor hidden;
Making divine the loftiest and the lowest,
When for a moment thou art not forbidden
To live within the life which thou bestowest;
And leaving noblest things vacant and chidden,
Cold as a corpse after the spirit's flight,
Blank as the sun after the birth of night.

In winds, and trees, and streams, and all things common,
In music, and the sweet unconscious tone
Of animals, and voices which are human,
Meant to express some feelings of their own;

In the soft motions and rare smile of woman,
In flowers and leaves, and in the grass fresh-shown
Or dying in the autumn, I the most
Adore thee present or lament thee lost.

And thus I went lamenting, when I saw
A plant upon the river's margin lie,
Like one who loved beyond his nature's law,
And in despair had cast him down to die;
Its leaves which had outlived the frost, the thaw
Had blighted; like a heart which hatred's eye
Can blast not, but which pity kills; the dew
Lay on its spotted leaves like tears too true.

The Heavens had wept upon it, but the Earth
Had crushed it on her unmaternal breast
. . . . . .

I bore it to my chamber, and I planted
It in a vase full of the lightest mould;
The winter beams which out of Heaven slanted
Fell through the window panes, disrobed of cold,
Upon its leaves and flowers; the star which panted
In evening for the Day, whose car has rolled
Over the horizon's wave, with looks of light
Smiled on it from the threshold of the night.

The mitigated influences of air
And light revived the plant, and from it grew
Strong leaves and tendrils, and its flowers fair,

Full as a cup with the vine's burning dew,
O'erflowed with golden colours; an atmosphere
Of vital warmth enfolded it anew,
And every impulse sent to every part
The unbeheld pulsations of its heart.

Well might the plant grow beautiful and strong,
Even if the air and sun had smiled not on it;
For one wept o'er it all the winter long
Tears pure as Heaven's rain, which fell upon it
Hour after hour; for sounds of softest song
Mixed with the stringèd melodies that won it
To leave the gentle lips on which it slept,
Had loosed the heart of him who sat and wept.

Had loosed his heart, and shook the leaves and flowers
On which he wept, the while the savage storm
Waked by the darkest of December's hours
Was raving round the chamber hushed & warm;
The birds were shivering in their leafless bowers,
The fish were frozen in the pools, the form
Of every summer plant was dead
Whilst this

LINES.

 E meet not as we parted,
We feel more than all may see;
My bosom is heavy-hearted,
And thine full of doubt for me.
One moment has bound the free.

That moment is gone for ever.
Like lightning that flashed and died,
Like a snowflake upon the river,
Like a sunbeam upon the tide,
Which the dark shadows hide.

That moment from time was singled
As the first of a life of pain,
The cup of its joy was mingled,
Delusion too sweet though vain!
Too sweet to be mine again.

Sweet lips, could my heart have hidden
That its life was crushed by you,
Ye would not have then forbidden
The death which a heart so true
Sought in your briny dew.

. . . . . .

Methinks too little cost
For a moment so found, so lost!

CHARLES THE FIRST.

Dramatis Personæ.

King Charles I.
Queen Henrietta.
Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury.
Wentworth, Earl of Strafford.
Lord Cottington.
Lord Weston.
Lord Coventry.
Williams, Bishop of Lincoln.
Secretary Lyttelton.
Juxon.
St. John.
Archy, the Court Fool.
Hampden.
Pym.
Cromwell.
Cromwell's Daughter.
Sir Harry Vane the younger.
Leighton.
Bastwick.
Prynne.
Gentlemen of the Inns of Court, Citizens, Pursuivants, Marshalsmen, Law Students, Judges, Clerk.

CHARLES THE FIRST.

Scene I. The Mask of the Inns of Court.

A Pursuivant



LACE for the Marshal of the Mask!

1st Citizen. What thinkest thou of this quaint mask which turns,
Like morning from the shadow of the night,
The night to day, and London to a place
Of peace and joy?

2nd Citizen. And Hell to Heaven.
Eight years are gone,
And they seem hours, since in this populous street
I trod on grass made green by summer's rain;
For the red plague kept state within that palace
Where now reigns vanity. In nine years more
The roots will be refreshed with civil blood;
And thank the mercy of insulted Heaven
That sin and wrongs wound as an orphan's cry,
The patience of the great avenger's ear.

A Youth. Yet, father, 'tis a happy sight to see,
Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden
By God or man; 'tis like the bright procession

Of skiey visions in a solemn dream
From which men wake as from a paradise,
And draw new strength to tread the thorns of life.
If God be good, wherefore should this be evil?
And if this be not evil, dost thou not draw
Unseasonable poison from the flowers
Which bloom so rarely in this barren world?
O, kill these bitter thoughts which make the present
Dark as the future!...

. . . . . .

When Avarice and Tyranny, vigilant Fear
And open-eyed Conspiracy, lie sleeping
As on Hell's threshold; and all gentle thoughts
Waken to worship Him who giveth joys
With his own gift.

2nd Cit. How young art thou in this old age of time!
How green in this grey world! Canst thou discern
The signs of seasons, yet perceive no hint
Of change in that stage-scene in which thou art
Not a spectator but an actor? or
Art thou a puppet moved by ....
The day that dawns in fire will die in storms,
Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done,
Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found
My inn of lasting rest; but thou must still
Be journeying on in this inclement air.
Wrap thy old cloak about thy back;
Nor leave the broad and plain and beaten road,
Although no flowers smile on the trodden dust,
For the violet paths of pleasure. This Charles the First

Rose like the equinoctial sun,....
By vapours, through whose threatening ominous veil,
Darting his altered influence, he has gained
This height of noon; from which he must decline
Amid the darkness of conflicting storms,
To dank extinction and to latest night....
There goes the apostate Strafford; he whose titles....
whispered aphorisms
From Machiavel and Bacon: and, if Judas
Had been as brazen and as bold as he....

1st Cit. That is the Archbishop.

2nd Cit. Rather say the Pope:
London will be soon his Rome: he walks
As if he trod upon the heads of men.
He looks elate, drunken with blood and gold;
Beside him moves the Babylonian woman
Invisibly, and with her as with his shadow,
Mitred adulterer! he is joined in sin,
Which turns Heaven's milk of mercy to revenge.

3rd Cit., lifting up his eyes Good Lord! rain it down upon him!....
Amid her ladies walks the papist queen,
As if her nice feet scorned our English earth.
The Canaanitish Jezebel! I would be
A dog if I might tear her with my teeth!
There's old Sir Henry Vane, the Earl of Pembroke,
Lord Essex, and Lord Keeper Coventry,
And others who made base their English breed
By vile participation of their honours

With papists, atheists, tyrants, and apostates.
When lawyers mask 'tis time for honest men
To strip the vizor from their purposes.
A seasonable time for maskers this!
When Englishmen and Protestants should sit
dust on their dishonoured heads,
To avert the wrath of him whose scourge is felt
For the great sins which have drawn down from
Heaven
and foreign overthrow.
The remnant of the martyred saints in Rochefort
Have been abandoned by their faithless allies
To that idolatrous and adulterous torturer
Lewis of France,... the Palatinate is lost.....
Enter Leighton, who has been branded in the face, and Bastwick.
Canst thou be... art thou.....?

Leighton I WAS Leighton: what
I AM thou seest. And yet turn thine eyes,
And with thy memory look on thy friend's mind,
Which is unchanged, and where is written deep
The sentence of my judge.

3rd Cit. Are these the marks with which
Laud thinks to improve the image of his Maker
Stamped on the face of man? Curses upon him,
The impious tyrant!

2nd Cit. It is said besides
That lewd and papist drunkards may profane
The Sabbath with their....
And has permitted that most heathenish custom

Of dancing round a pole dressed up with wreaths
On May-day.
A man who thus twice crucifies his God
May well his brother. In my mind, friend,
The root of all this ill is prelacy.
I would cut up the root.

3rd Cit. And by what means?

2nd Cit. Smiting each Bishop under the fifth rib.

3rd Cit. You seem to know the vulnerable place
Of these same crocodiles.

2nd Cit. I learned it in
Egyptian bondages, sir. Your worm of Nile
Betrays not with its flattering tears like they;
For, when they cannot kill, they whine and weep.
Nor is it half so greedy of men's bodies
As they of soul and all; nor does it wallow
In slime as they in simony and lies
And close lusts of the flesh.

A Marshalsman Give place, give place!
You torch-bearers, advance to the great gate,
And then attend the Marshal of the Mask
Into the royal presence.

A Law Student What thinkest thou
Of this quaint show of ours, my agèd friend?
Even now we see the redness of the torches
Inflame the night to the eastward, & the clarions
Gasp to us on the wind's wave. It comes!
And their sounds, floating hither round the pageant,
Rouse up the astonished air.

1st Cit. I will not think but that our country's wounds
May yet be healed. The king is just & gracious,
Though wicked counsels now pervert his will.
These once cast off...

2nd Cit. As adders cast their skins
And keep their venom, so kings often change;
Councils and counsellors hang on one another,
Hiding the loathsome....
Like the base patchwork of a leper's rags.

The Youth O still those dissonant thoughts! List how the music
Grows on the enchanted air! And see, the torches
Restlessly flashing, and the crowd divided
Like waves before an admiral's prow!

. . . . . .

A Marshalsman Give place
To the Marshal of the Mask!

A Pursuivant Room for the King!

The Youth How glorious! See those thronging chariots
Rolling, like painted clouds before the wind,
Behind their solemn steeds: how some are shaped
Like curvèd sea-shells dyed by the azure depths
Of Indian seas; some like the new-born moon;
And some like cars in which the Romans climbed
(Canopied by Victory's eagle-wings outspread)
The Capitolian. See how gloriously
The mettled horses in the torchlight stir
Their gallant riders, while they check their pride,
Like shapes of some diviner element

Than English air, and beings nobler than
The envious and admiring multitude.

2nd Cit. Ay, there they are...
Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees,
Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,
On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows.
Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,
Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.
These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,
Who toil not, neither do they spin, unless
It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.
Here is the surfeit which to them who earn
The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves
The tithe that will support them till they crawl
Back to her cold, hard bosom. Here is health
Followed by grim disease, glory by shame,
Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want,
And England's sin by England's punishment.
And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone,
Lo, giving substance to my words, behold
At once the sign and the thing signified...
A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,
Horsed upon stumbling jades, carted with dung,
Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins
And rotten hiding-holes, to point the moral
Of this presentment, and bring up the rear
Of painted pomp with misery!

The Youth 'Tis but
The anti-mask, and serves as discords do
In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers

If they succeeded not to Winter's flaw;
Or day unchanged by night; or joy itself
Without the touch of sorrow?

2nd Cit. I and thou....

A Marshalsman Place, give place!

Scene II. A Chamber in Whitehall. Enter the King, Queen, Laud, Lord Strafford, Lord Cottington, and other Lords; Archy; also St. John, with some gentlemen of the Inns of Court.

King THANKS, gentlemen. I heartily accept
This token of your service; your gay mask
Was performed gallantly. And it shows well
When subjects twine such flowers of observance
With the sharp thorns that deck the English crown.
A gentle heart enjoys what it confers,
Even as it suffers that which it inflicts,
Though Justice guides the stroke.
Accept my hearty thanks.

Queen And, gentlemen,
Call your poor Queen your debtor. Your quaint pageant
Rose on me like the figures of past years,
Treading their still path back to infancy,
More beautiful and mild as they draw nearer
The quiet cradle. I could have almost wept

To think I was in Paris, where these shows
Are well devised, such as I was ere yet
My young heart shared a portion of the burthen,
The careful weight, of this great monarchy.
There, gentlemen, between the sovereign's pleasure
And that which it regards, no clamour lifts
Its proud interposition.
In Paris ribald censurers dare not move
Their poisonous tongues against these sinless sports;
And HIS smile
Warms those who bask in it, as ours would do
If.... Take my heart's thanks; add them, gentlemen,
To those good words which, were he King of France,
My royal lord would turn to golden deeds.

St. John Madam, the love of Englishmen can make
The lightest favour of their lawful king
Outweigh a despot's. We humbly take our leaves,
Enriched by smiles which France can never buy.

Exeunt St. John and the Gentlemen of the Inns of Court.

King My Lord Archbishop,
Mark you what spirit sits in St. John's eyes?
Methinks it is too saucy for this presence.

Archy Yes, pray your Grace look: for, like an unsophisticated .... sees everything upside down, you who are wise will discern the shadow of an idiot in lawn

sleeves & a rochet setting springes to catch woodcocks in haymaking time. Poor Archy, whose owl-eyes are tempered to the error of his age, and because he is a fool, and by special ordinance of God forbidden ever to see himself as he is, sees now in that deep eye a blindfold devil sitting on the ball, and weighing words out between king & subjects. One scale is full of promises, and the other full of protestations; and then another devil creeps behind the first out of the dark windings .... pregnant lawyer's brain, and takes the bandage from the other's eyes, and throws a sword into the left-hand scale, for all the world like my Lord Essex's there.

Strafford A rod in pickle for the Fool's back!

Archy Ay, and some are now smiling whose tears will make the brine; for the Fool sees....

Strafford Insolent! You shall have your coat turned and be whipped out of the palace for this.

Archy When all the fools are whipped, and all the protestant writers, while the knaves are whipping the fools ever since a thief was set to catch a thief. If all turncoats were whipped out of palaces, poor Archy would be disgraced in good company. Let the knaves whip the fools, and all the fools laugh at it.....wise and godly slit each other's noses and ears (having no need of any sense of discernment in their craft); and the knaves, to marshal them, join in a procession to Bedlam, to entreat the madmen to omit their sublime Platonic con-

templations, and manage the state of England.
Let all the honest men who lie pinched up at
the prisons or the pillories, in custody of the pur-
suivants of the High-Commission Court, mar-
shal them.

Enter Secretary Lyttelton, with papers.

King, looking over the papers

These stiff Scots
His Grace of Canterbury must take order
To force under the Church's yoke. You, Went-
worth,
Shall be myself in Ireland, and shall add
Your wisdom, gentleness, and energy,
To what in me were wanting. My Lord Weston,
Look that those merchants draw not without loss
Their bullion from the Tower; and, on the pay-
ment
Of ship-money, take fullest compensation
For violation of our royal forests,
Whose limits, from neglect, have been o'ergrown
With cottages and cornfields. The uttermost
Farthing exact from those who claim exemption
From knighthood: that which once was a reward
Shall thus be made a punishment, that subjects
May know how majesty can wear at will
The rugged mood. My Lord of Coventry,
Lay my command upon the Courts below
That bail be not accepted for the prisoners
Under the warrant of the Star Chamber.
The people shall not find the stubbornness
Of Parliament a cheap or easy method

Of dealing with their rightful sovereign:
And doubt not this, my Lord of Coventry,
We will find time and place for fit rebuke.
My Lord of Canterbury.

Archy — The fool is here.

Laud — I crave permission of your Majesty
To order that this insolent fellow be
Chastised: he mocks the sacred character,
Scoffs at the state, and...

King — What, my Archy?
He mocks and mimics all he sees and hears,
Yet with a quaint and graceful license. Prithee
For this once do not as Prynne would, were he
Primate of England. With your Grace's leave,
He lives in his own world; and, like a parrot
Hung in his gilded prison from the window
Of a queen's bower over the public way,
Blasphemes with a bird's mind: his words, like arrows
Which know no aim beyond the archer's wit,
Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy.
To Archy.
Go, sirrah, and repent of your offence
Ten minutes in the rain: be it your penance
To bring news how the world goes there.

Exit Archy.

Poor Archy!
He weaves about himself a world of mirth
Out of the wreck of ours.

Laud — I take with patience, as my Master did,

All scoffs permitted from above.

King My lord,
Pray overlook these papers. Archy's words
Had wings, but these have talons.

Queen And the lion
That wears them must be tamed. My dearest lord,
I see the new-born courage in your eye
Armed to strike dead the spirit of the time,
Which spurs to rage the many-headed beast.
Do thou persist: for, faint but in resolve,
And it were better thou hadst still remained
The slave of thine own slaves, who tear like curs
The fugitive, and flee from the pursuer;
And Opportunity, that empty wolf,
Flies at his throat who falls. Subdue thy actions
Even to the disposition of thy purpose,
And be that tempered as the Ebro's steel;
And banish weak-eyed Mercy to the weak,
Whence she will greet thee with a gift of peace,
And not betray thee with a traitor's kiss,
As when she keeps the company of rebels,
Who think that she is Fear. This do, lest we
Should fall as from a glorious pinnacle
In a bright dream, and wake, as from a dream,
Out of our worshipped state.

King Belovèd friend,
God is my witness that this weight of power,
Which he sets me my earthly task to wield
Under his law, is my delight and pride
Only because thou lovest that and me.

For a king bears the office of a God
To all the under world; and to his God
Alone he must deliver up his trust,
Unshorn of its permitted attributes.
.... now as the baser elements
Had mutinied against the golden sun
That kindles them to harmony, and quells
Their self-destroying rapine. The wild million
Strike at the eye that guides them; like as humours
Of the distempered body that conspire
Against the spirit of life throned in the heart,
And thus become the prey of one another,
And last of death....

Strafford That which would be ambition in a subject
Is duty in a sovereign; for on him,
As on a keystone, hangs the arch of life,
Whose safety is its strength. Degree and form,
And all that makes the age of reasoning man
More memorable than a beast's, depend on this...
That Right should fence itself inviolably
With power; in which respect the state of England
From usurpation by the insolent commons
Cries for reform.
Get treason, and spare treasure. Fee with coin
The loudest murmurers; feed with jealousies
Opposing factions, be thyself of none;
And borrow gold of many, for those who lend
Will serve thee till thou payest them; and thus
Keep the fierce spirit of the hour at bay,
Till time, and its coming generations

Of nights and days unborn, bring some one chance,
. . . . . .
Or war or pestilence or Nature's self,
By some distemperature or terrible sign,
Be as an arbiter betwixt themselves.
Nor let your Majesty
Doubt here the peril of the unseen event.
How did your brother kings, coheritors
In your high interest in the subject earth,
Rise past such troubles to that height of power
Where now they sit, and awfully serene
Smile on the trembling world? Such popular storms
Philip the Second of Spain, this Lewis of France,
And late the German head of many bodies,
And every petty lord of Italy,
Quelled or by arts or arms. Is England poorer
Or feebler? or art thou who wield'st her power
Tamer than they? or shall this island be...
.... by its inviolable waters...
To the world present and the world to come
Sole pattern of extinguished monarchy?
Not if thou dost as I would have thee do.

King Your words shall be my deeds:
You speak the image of my thought. My friend
(If kings can have a friend, I call thee so),
Beyond the large commission which belongs
Under the great seal of the realm, take this:
And, for some obvious reasons, let there be
No seal on it, except my kingly word
And honour as I am a gentleman.

Be, as thou art within my heart and mind,
Another self, here and in Ireland:
Do what thou judgest well, take amplest license,
And stick not even at questionable means.
Hear me, Wentworth. My word is as a wall
Between thee and this world thine enemy,
That hates thee, for thou lovest me.

Strafford I own
No friend but thee, no enemies but thine:
Thy lightest thought is my eternal law.
How weak, how short, is life to pay...

King Peace, peace!
Thou ow'st me nothing yet.
To Laud. My lord, what say
Those papers?

Laud Your Majesty has ever interposed,
In lenity towards your native soil,
Between the heavy vengeance of the Church
And Scotland. Mark the consequence of warming
This brood of northern vipers in your bosom.
The rabble, instructed no doubt
By Loudon, Lindsay, Hume, and false Argyll,
(For the waves never menace heaven until
Scourged by the wind's invisible tyranny)
Have in the very temple of the Lord
Done outrage to his chosen ministers.
They scorn the liturgy of the holy Church,
Refuse to obey her canons, and deny
The apostolic power with which the Spirit
Has filled its elect vessels, even from him

Who held the keys with power to loose and bind,
To him who now pleads in this royal presence.
Let ampler powers and new instructions be
Sent to the High Commissioners in Scotland.
To death, imprisonment, and confiscation,
Add torture, add the ruin of the kindred
Of the offender, add the brand of infamy,
Add mutilation: and if this suffice not,
Unleash the sword and fire, that in their thirst
They may lick up that scum of schismatics.
I laugh at those weak rebels who, desiring
What we possess, still prate of christian peace;
As if those dreadful arbitrating messengers
Which play the part of God 'twixt right and wrong,
Should be let loose against the innocent sleep
Of templed cities and the smiling fields,
For some poor argument of policy
Which touches our own profit or our pride,
Where it indeed were christian charity
To turn the cheek even to the smiter's hand:
And, when our great Redeemer, when our God,
When he who gave, accepted, and retained,
Himself in propitiation of our sins,
Is scorned in his immediate ministry,
With hazard of the inestimable loss
Of all the truth and discipline which is
Salvation to the extremest generation
Of men innumerable, they talk of peace!
Such peace as Canaan found, let Scotland now:
For, by that Christ who came to bring a sword,

Not peace, upon the earth, and gave command
To his disciples at the passover
That each should sell his robe & buy a sword, ...
Once strip that minister of naked wrath,
And it shall never sleep in peace again
Till Scotland bend or break.

King My Lord Archbishop,
Do what thou wilt and what thou canst in this.
Thy earthly even as thy heavenly King
Gives thee large power in his unquiet realm.
But we want money, and my mind misgives me
That for so great an enterprise, as yet,
We are unfurnished.

Strafford Yet it may not long
Rest on our wills.

Cottington The expenses
Of gathering ship-money, and of distraining
For every petty rate (for we encounter
A desperate opposition inch by inch
In every warehouse and on every farm),
Have swallowed up the gross sum of the imposts;
So that, though felt as a most grievous scourge
Upon the land, they stand us in small stead
As touches the receipt.

Strafford 'Tis a conclusion
Most arithmetical: and thence you infer
Perhaps the assembling of a parliament.
Now, if a man should call his dearest enemies
To sit in licensed judgment on his life,
His Majesty might wisely take that course.

Aside to Cottington.
It is enough to expect from these lean imposts
That they perform the office of a scourge,
Without more profit.
Aloud. Fines and confiscations,
And a forced loan from the refractory city,
Will fill our coffers; and the golden love
Of loyal gentlemen and noble friends
For the worshipped father of our common country,
With contributions from the Catholics,
Will make Rebellion pale in our excess.
Be these the expedients until time and wisdom
Shall frame a settled state of government.

Laud And weak expedients they! Have we not drained
All, till the which seemed
A mine exhaustless?

Strafford And the love which IS,
If loyal hearts could turn their blood to gold.

Laud Both now grow barren: and I speak it not
As loving parliaments, which, as they have been
In the right hand of bold bad mighty kings
The scourges of the bleeding Church, I hate.
Methinks they scarcely can deserve our fear.

Strafford Oh, my dear liege, take back the wealth thou gavest:
With that, take all I held, but as in trust
For thee, of mine inheritance: leave me but
This unprovided body for thy service,
And a mind dedicated to no care
Except thy safety: but assemble not
A parliament. Hundreds will bring, like me,

Their fortunes, as they would their blood, before...

King No! thou who judgest them art but one. Alas!
We should be too much out of love with heaven,
Did this vile world show many such as thee,
Thou perfect just and honourable man!
Never shall it be said that Charles of England
Stripped those he loved for fear of those he scorns;
Nor will he so much misbecome his throne
As to impoverish those who most adorn
And best defend it. That you urge, dear Strafford,
Inclines me rather...

Queen To a parliament?
Is this thy firmness? and thou wilt preside
Over a knot of censurers,
To the unswearing of thy best resolves,
And choose the worst, when the worst comes too soon?
Plight not the worst before the worst must come.
Oh, wilt thou smile whilst our ribald foes,
Dressed in their own usurped authority,
Sharpen their tongues on Henrietta's fame?
It is enough! Thou lovest me no more! Weeps.

King Oh, Henrietta! They talk apart.

Cottington, to Laud. Money we have none:
And all the expedients of my Lord of Strafford
Will scarcely meet the arrears.

Laud Without delay
An army must be sent into the north;
Followed by a Commission of the Church,
With amplest power to quench in fire and blood,

And tears and terror, and the pity of hell,
The intenser wrath of Heresy. God will give
Victory; and victory over Scotland give
The lion England tamed into our hands.
That will lend power, and power bring gold.

Cottington Meanwhile
We must begin first where your Grace leaves off.
Gold must give power, or...

Laud I am not averse
From the assembling of a parliament.
Strong actions and smooth words might teach them soon
The lesson to obey. And are they not
A bubble fashioned by the monarch's mouth,
The birth of one light breath? If they serve no purpose,
A word dissolves them.

Strafford The engine of parliaments
Might be deferred until I can bring over
The Irish regiments; they will serve to assure
The issue of the war against the Scots.
And, this game won, which if lost, all is lost,
Gather these chosen leaders of the rebels,
And call them, if you will, a parliament.

King Oh be our feet still tardy to shed blood,
Guilty though it may be! I would still spare
The stubborn country of my birth, and ward
From countenances which I loved in youth
The wrathful Church's lacerating hand.

To Laud.

Have you o'erlooked the other articles?

Re-enter Archy.

Laud Hazlerig, Hampden, Pym, young Harry Vane,
Cromwell, and other rebels of less note,
Intend to sail with the next favouring wind
For the Plantations.

Archy Where they think to found
A commonwealth like Gonzalo's in the play,
Gynæcocœnic and pantisocratic.

King What's that, sirrah?

Archy New devil's politics.
Hell is the pattern of all commonwealths:
Lucifer was the first republican.
Will you hear Merlin's prophecy, how three posts
"In one brainless skull, when the whitethorn is full,
Shall sail round the world, and come back again:
Shall sail round the world in a brainless skull,
And come back again when the moon is at full:"...
When, in spite of the Church,
They will hear homilies of whatever length
Or form they please.

Cottington So please your Majesty to sign this order
For their detention.

Archy If your Majesty were tormented night and day by fever, gout, rheumatism, & stone, and asthma, etc., and you found these diseases had secretly entered into a conspiracy to abandon you, should you think it necessary to lay an embargo on the port

by which they meant to dispeople your unquiet kingdom of man?

King If fear were made for kings, the Fool mocks wisely;
But in this case... (writing) Here, my lord, take the warrant,
And see it duly executed forthwith.
That imp of malice & mockery shall be punished.

Exeunt all but King, Queen, and Archy.

Archy Ay, I am the physician of whom Plato prophesied, who was to be accused by the confectioner before a jury of children, who found him guilty without waiting for the summing-up, and hanged him without benefit of clergy. Thus Baby Charles, and the Twelfth-night Queen of Hearts, and the overgrown schoolboy Cottington, and that little urchin Laud, who would reduce a verdict of "guilty, death," by famine, if it were impregnable by composition, all impanelled against poor Archy for presenting them bitter physic the last day of the holidays.

Queen Is the rain over, sirrah?

King When it rains
And the sun shines, 'twill rain again to-morrow;
And therefore never smile till you've done crying.

Archy But 'tis all over now; like the April anger of woman, the gentle sky has wept itself serene.

Queen What news abroad? how looks the world this morning?

Archy Gloriously as a grave covered with virgin flowers.

There's a rainbow in the sky. Let your Majesty look at it, for

"A rainbow in the morning
Is the shepherd's warning;"

and the flocks of which you are the pastor are scattered among the mountain-tops, where every drop of water is a flake of snow, and the breath of May pierces like a January blast.

King The sheep have mistaken the wolf for their shepherd, my poor boy; and the shepherd, the wolves for their watchdogs.

Queen But the rainbow was a good sign, Archy; it says that the waters of the deluge are gone, and can return no more.

Archy Ay, the salt-water one: but that of tears & blood must yet come down, and that of fire follow, if there be any truth in lies. The rainbow hung over the city with all its shops,.... and churches, from north to south, like a bridge of congregated lightning pieced by the masonry of heaven; like a balance in which the angel that distributes the coming hour was weighing that heavy one whose poise is now felt in the lightest hearts, before it bows the proudest heads under the meanest feet.

Queen Who taught you this trash, sirrah?

Archy A torn leaf out of an old book trampled in the dirt. But for the rainbow. It moved as the sun moved, and .... until the top of the Tower .... of a cloud through its left-hand tip, & Lambeth Palace look

as dark as a rock before the other. Methought I saw a crown figured upon one tip, and a mitre on the other. So, as I had heard treasures were found where the rainbow quenches its points upon the earth, I set off, & at the Tower.... But I shall not tell your Majesty what I found close to the closet-window on which the rainbow had glimmered.

King Speak: I will make my Fool my conscience.

Archy Then conscience is a fool. I saw there a cat caught in a rat-trap. I heard the rats squeak behind the wainscots: it seemed to me that the very mice were consulting on the manner of her death.

Queen Archy is shrewd and bitter.

Archy Like the season, so blow the winds.... But at the other end of the rainbow, where the grey rain was tempered along the grass & leaves by a tender interfusion of violet and gold in the meadows beyond Lambeth, what think you that I found instead of a mitre?

King Vane's wits perhaps.

Archy Something as vain. I saw a gross vapour hovering in a stinking ditch over the carcass of a dead ass, some rotten rags, and broken dishes, the wrecks of what once administered to the stuffing-out and the ornament of a worm of worms. His Grace of Canterbury expects to enter the New Jerusalem some Palm Sunday in triumph on the ghost of this ass.

Queen Enough, enough! Go desire Lady Jane
She place my lute, together with the music

Mari received last week from Italy,
In my boudoir, and ... Exit Archy.

King I'll go in.

Queen My beloved lord,
Have you not noted that the Fool of late
Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words
Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears?
What can it mean? I should be loath to think
Some factious slave had tutored him.

King Oh, no!
He is but Occasion's pupil. Partly 'tis
That our minds piece the vacant intervals
Of his wild words with their own fashioning;
As in the imagery of summer clouds,
Or coals of the winter fire, idlers find
The perfect shadows of their teeming thoughts:
And partly, that the terrors of the time
Are sown by wandering Rumour in all spirits;
And in the lightest and the least may best
Be seen the current of the coming wind.

Queen Your brain is overwrought with these deep thoughts.
Come, I will sing to you; let us go try
These airs from Italy; and, as we pass
The gallery, we'll decide where that Correggio
Shall hang, the Virgin Mother
With her child, born the King of heaven & earth,
Whose reign is men's salvation. And you shall see
A cradled miniature of yourself asleep,
Stamped on the heart by never-erring love;

Liker than any Vandyke ever made,
A pattern to the unborn age of thee,
Over whose sweet beauty I have wept for joy
A thousand times, and now should weep for
sorrow,
Did I not think that after we were dead
Our fortunes would spring high in him, and that
The cares we waste upon our heavy crown
Would make it light and glorious as a wreath
Of heaven's beams for his dear innocent brow.

King Dear Henrietta!

Scene III. The Star Chamber. Laud, Juxon, Strafford, and others, as Judges. Prynne, as a prisoner, and then Bastwick.

Laud  RING forth the prisoner Bastwick: let the clerk
Recite his sentence.

Clerk. "That he pay five thousand
Pounds to the king, lose both his
ears, be branded
With red-hot iron on the cheek and forehead,
And be imprisoned within Lancaster Castle
During the pleasure of the Court."

Laud Prisoner,
If you have aught to say wherefore this sentence
Should not be put into effect, now speak.

Juxon If you have aught to plead in mitigation,
Speak.

Bastwick Thus, my lords. If, like the prelates, I

Were an invader of the royal power,
A public scorner of the word of God,
Profane, idolatrous, popish, superstitious,
Impious in heart and in tyrannic act,
Void of wit, honesty and temperance;
If Satan were my lord, as theirs, our God
Pattern of all I should avoid to do;
Were I an enemy of my God and King
And of good men, as ye are; I should merit
Your fearful state and gilt prosperity,
Which, when ye wake from the last sleep, shall turn
To cowls and robes of everlasting fire.
But, as I am, I bid ye grudge me not
The only earthly favour ye can yield,
Or I think worth acceptance at your hands,
Scorn, mutilation and imprisonment.
Even as my Master did,
Until Heaven's kingdom shall descend on earth,
Or earth be like a shadow in the light
Of Heaven absorbed. Some few tumultuous years
Will pass, and leave no wreck of what opposes
His will whose will is power.

Laud Officer, take the prisoner from the bar,
And be his tongue slit for his insolence.

Bastwick While this hand holds a pen ...

Laud Be his hands ...

Juxon Stop!
Forbear, my lord! The tongue, which now can speak

No terror, would interpret, being dumb,
Heaven's thunder to our harm; ....
And hands, which now write only their own shame
With bleeding stumps might sign our blood away.

Laud Much more such "mercy" among men would be,
Did all the ministers of Heaven's revenge
Flinch thus from earthly retribution. I
Could suffer what I would inflict.

Exit Bastwick guarded.

Bring up
The Lord Bishop of Lincoln. ...

To Strafford. Know you not
That, in distraining for ten thousand pounds
Upon his books and furniture at Lincoln,
Were found these scandalous and seditious letters
Sent from one Osbaldistone, who is fled?
I speak it not as touching this poor person;
But of the office which should make it holy,
Were it as vile as it was ever spotless.
Mark too, my lord, that this expression strikes
His Majesty, if I misinterpret not.

Enter Bishop Williams guarded.

Strafford 'Twere politic and just that Williams taste
The bitter fruit of his connection with
The schismatics. But you, my Lord Archbishop,
Who owed your first promotion to his favour,
Who grew beneath his smile...

Laud Would therefore beg
The office of his judge from this High Court,
That it shall seem, even as it is, that I,

In my assumption of this sacred robe,
Have put aside all worldly preference,
All sense of all distinction of all persons,
All thoughts but of the service of the Church.
Bishop of Lincoln!

Williams

Peace, proud hierarch!
I know my sentence, and I own it just.
Thou wilt repay me less than I deserve
In stretching to the utmost

. . . . . .

Scene IV. Hampden, Pym, Cromwell, his Daughter, and young Sir Harry Vane.

Hampden



NGLAND, farewell! Thou, who hast been my cradle,
Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave!
I held what I inherited in thee
As pawn for that inheritance of freedom
Which thou hast sold for thy despoiler's smile:
How can I call thee England, or my country?...
Does the wind hold?

Vane

The vanes sit steady
Upon the Abbey towers. The silver lightnings
Of the evening star, spite of the city's smoke,
Tell that the north wind reigns in the upper air.
Mark too that flock of fleecy-wingèd clouds
Sailing athwart St. Margaret's.

Hampden

Hail, fleet herald

Of tempest! that rude pilot who shall guide
Hearts free as his, to realms as pure as thee,
Beyond the shot of tyranny,
Beyond the webs of that swoln spider....
Beyond the curses, calumnies, and lies
Of atheist priests! And thou
Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic,
Athwart its zones of tempest and of calm,
Bright as the path to a belovèd home,
Oh, light us to the isles of the evening land!
Like floating Edens cradled in the glimmer
Of sunset, through the distant mist of years
Touched by departing hope, they gleam! lone regions,
Where power's poor dupes and victims yet have never
Propitiated the savage fear of kings
With purest blood of noblest hearts; whose dew
Is yet unstained with tears of those who wake
To weep each day the wrongs on which it dawns;
Whose sacred silent air owns yet no echo
Of formal blasphemies; nor impious rites
Wrest man's free worship, from the God who loves,
To the poor worm who envies us his love!
Receive, thou young of Paradise,
These exiles from the old and sinful world!

. . . . . .

This glorious clime, this firmament, whose lights
Dart mitigated influence through their veil
Of pale blue atmosphere; whose tears keep green

The pavement of this moist all-feeding earth;
This vaporous horizon, whose dim round
Is bastioned by the circumfluous sea,
Repelling invasion from the sacred towers,
Presses upon me like a dungeon's grate,
A low dark roof, a damp and narrow wall.
The boundless universe
Becomes a cell too narrow for the soul
That owns no master; while the loathliest ward
Of this wide prison, England, is a nest
Of cradling peace built on the mountain tops,
To which the eagle spirits of the free,
Which range through heaven and earth, and scorn the storm
Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth,
Return to brood on thoughts that cannot die
And cannot be repelled.
Like eaglets floating in the heaven of time,
They soar above their quarry, and shall stoop
Through palaces and temples thunderproof.

Scene V.

Archy

I'LL go live under the ivy that overgrows the terrace, and count the tears shed on its old roots as the wind plays the song of
"A widow bird sate mourning
Upon a wintry bough."

Sings

Heigho! the lark and the owl!
One flies the morning, and one lulls the night;
Only the nightingale, poor fond soul,
Sings like the fool through darkness and light.

"A widow bird sate mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough;
The frozen wind crept on above,
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air
Except the mill-wheel's sound."

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.

Scene. Before the Cavern of the Indian Enchantress. The Enchantress comes forth.

Enchantress



E came like a dream in
the dawn of life,
He fled like a shadow
before its noon;
He is gone, and my peace
is turned to strife,
And I wander and wane
like the weary moon.
O sweet Echo, wake,
And for my sake
Make answer the while my heart shall break!

But my heart has a music which Echo's lips,
Though tender and true, yet can answer not,
And the shadow that moves in the soul's eclipse
Can return not the kiss by his now forgot;
Sweet lips! he who hath
On my desolate path
Cast the darkness of absence, worse than death!

The Enchantress makes her spell: she is answered by a Spirit.

Spirit Within the silent centre of the earth
My mansion is; where I have lived insphered
From the beginning, and around my sleep
Have woven all the wondrous imagery
Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;
Infinite depths of unknown elements
Massed into one impenetrable mask;
Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins
Of gold and stone, and adamantine iron.
And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven
I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds,
And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns
In the dark space of interstellar air.

. . . . . .

Another Scene. Indian Youth and Lady.

Indian AND, if my grief should still be dearer to me
Than all the pleasures in the world beside,
Why would you lighten it?...
Lady. I offer only
That which I seek, some human sympathy
In this mysterious island.
Indian Oh, my friend,
My sister, my beloved!... What do I say?
My brain is dizzy, and I scarce know whether
I speak to thee or her.
Lady Peace, perturbed heart!

I am to thee only as thou to mine,
The passing wind which heals the brow at noon,
And may strike cold into the breast at night,
Yet cannot linger where it soothes the most,
Or long soothe, could it linger.

Indian — But you said
You also loved?

Lady — Loved! Oh, I love. Methinks
This word of love is fit for all the world,
And that for gentle hearts another name
Would speak of gentler thoughts than the world owns.
I have loved.

Indian — And thou lovest not? if so
Young as thou art thou canst afford to weep.

Lady — Oh! would that I could claim exemption
From all the bitterness of that sweet name.
I loved, I love, and when I love no more
Let joys and grief perish, and leave despair
To ring the knell of youth. He stood beside me,
The embodied vision of the brightest dream,
Which like a dawn heralds the day of life;
The shadow of his presence made my world
A paradise. All familiar things he touched,
All common words he spoke, became to me
Like forms and sounds of a diviner world.
He was as is the sun in his fierce youth,
As terrible and lovely as a tempest;
He came, and went, and left me what I am.
Alas! Why must I think how oft we two

Have sate together near the river springs,
Under the green pavilion which the willow
Spreads on the floor of the unbroken fountain,
Strewn, by the nurslings that linger there,
Over that islet paved with flowers and moss, ...
While the musk-rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Showered on us, & the dove mourned in the pine,
Sad prophetess of sorrows not her own?
The crane returned to her unfrozen haunt,
And the false cuckoo bade the spring good morn;
And on a wintry bough the widowed bird,
Hid in the deepest night of ivy-leaves,
Renewed the vigils of a sleepless sorrow.
I, left like her, and leaving one like her,
Alike abandoned and abandoning
(Oh! unlike her in this!) the gentlest youth,
Whose love had made my sorrows dear to him,
Even as my sorrow made his love to me!

Indian One curse of Nature stamps in the same mould
The features of the wretched; and they are
As like as violet to violet,
When memory, the ghost, their odours keeps
'Mid the cold relics of abandoned joy....
Proceed.

Lady He was a simple innocent boy.
I loved him well, but not as he desired;
Yet even thus he was content to be: ...
A short content, for I was....

Indian (aside) God of heaven!

From such an islet, such a river-spring....!
I dare not ask her if there stood upon it
A pleasure-dome, surmounted by a crescent,
With steps to the blue water. Aloud. It may be
That Nature masks in life several copies
Of the same lot, so that the sufferers
May feel another's sorrow as their own,
And find in friendship what they lost in love.
That cannot be: yet it is strange that we,
From the same scene, by the same path to this
Realm of abandonment.... But speak! your breath...
Your breath is like soft music, your words are
The echoes of a voice which on my heart
Sleeps like a melody of early days.
But as you said...

Lady

He was so awful, yet
So beautiful in mystery and terror,
Calming me as the loveliness of heaven
Soothes the unquiet sea:...and yet not so,
For he seemed stormy, and would often seem
A quenchless sun masked in portentous clouds;
For such his thoughts, and even his actions were;
But he was not of them, nor they of him,
But as they hid his splendour from the earth.
Some said he was a man of blood and peril,
And steeped in bitter infamy to the lips.
More need was there I should be innocent,
More need that I should be most true and kind,
And much more need that there should be found
one

To share remorse, and scorn and solitude,
And all the ills that wait on those who do
The tasks of ruin in the world of life.
He fled, and I have followed him.

Indian Such a one
Is he who was the winter of my peace.
But, fairest stranger, when didst thou depart
From the far hills where rise the springs of India?
How didst thou pass the intervening sea?

Lady If I be sure I am not dreaming now,
I should not doubt to say it was a dream.
Methought a star came down from heaven,
And rested mid the plants of India,
Which I had given a shelter from the frost
Within my chamber. There the meteor lay,
Panting forth light among the leaves and flowers,
As if it lived, and was outworn with speed;
Or that it loved, and passion made the pulse
Of its bright life throb like an anxious heart,
Till it diffused itself, and all the chamber
And walls seemed melted into emerald fire
That burned not; in the midst of which appeared
A spirit like a child, and laughed aloud
A thrilling peal of such sweet merriment
As made the blood tingle in my warm feet:
Then bent over a vase, and murmuring
Low, unintelligible melodies,
Placed something in the mould like melon-seeds,
And slowly faded, and in place of it
A soft hand issued from the veil of fire,

Holding a cup like a magnolia flower,
And poured upon the earth within the vase
The element with which it overflowed,
Brighter than morning light and purer than
The water of the springs of Himalah.

Indian Lady

You waked not?
Not until my dream became
Like a child's legend on the tideless sand,
Which the first foam erases half, and half
Leaves legible. At length I rose, and went,
Visiting my flowers from pot to pot, and thought
To set new cuttings in the empty urns,
And when I came to that beside the lattice,
I saw two little dark-green leaves
Lifting the light mould at their birth, and then
I half-remembered my forgotten dream.
And day by day, green as a gourd in June,
The plant grew fresh and thick, yet no one knew
What plant it was; its stem and tendrils seemed
Like emerald snakes, mottled and diamonded
With azure mail and streaks of woven silver;
And all the sheaths that folded the dark buds
Rose like the crest of cobra-di-capel,
Until the golden eye of the bright flower
Through the dark lashes of those veinèd lids,
Disencumbered of their silent sleep,
Gazed like a star into the morning light.
Its leaves were delicate, you almost saw
The pulses
With which the purple velvet flower was fed

To overflow, and, like a poet's heart
Changing bright fancy to sweet sentiment,
Changed half the light to fragrance. It soon fell,
And to a green and dewy embryo-fruit
Left all its treasured beauty. Day by day
I nursed the plant, and on the double flute
Played to it on the sunny winter days
Soft melodies, as sweet as April rain
On silent leaves, and sang those words in which
Passion makes Echo taunt the sleeping strings;
And I would send tales of forgotten love
Late into the lone night, and sing wild songs
Of maids deserted in the olden time,
And weep like a soft cloud in April's bosom
Upon the sleeping eyelids of the plant,
So that perhaps it dreamed that Spring was come,
And crept abroad into the moonlight air,
And loosened all its limbs, as, noon by noon,
The sun averted less his oblique beam.

Indian Lady

And the plant died not in the frost?
It grew;
And went out of the lattice which I left
Half open for it, trailing its quaint spires
Along the garden and across the lawn,
And down the slope of moss and through the tufts
Of wild-flower roots, and stumps of trees o'ergrown
With simple lichens, and old hoary stones,
On to the margin of the glassy pool,
Even to a nook of unblown violets
And lilies-of-the-valley yet unborn,

Under a pine with ivy overgrown.
And there its fruit lay like a sleeping lizard
Under the shadows; but when Spring indeed
Came to unswathe her infants, and the lilies
Peeped from their bright green masks to
wonder at
This shape of autumn couched in their recess,
Then it dilated, and it grew until
One half lay floating on the fountain wave,
Whose pulse, elapsed in unlike sympathies,
Kept time
Among the snowy water-lily buds.
Its shape was such as summer melody
Of the south wind in spicy vales might give
To some light cloud bound from the golden dawn
To fairy isles of evening, and it seemed
In hue and form that it had been a mirror
Of all the hues and forms around it and
Upon it pictured by the sunny beams
Which, from the bright vibrations of the pool,
Were thrown upon the rafters and the roof
Of boughs and leaves, and on the pillared stems
Of the dark sylvan temple, and reflections
Of every infant flower and star of moss
And veined leaf in the azure odorous air.
And thus it lay in the Elysian calm
Of its own beauty, floating on the line
Which, like a film in purest space, divided
The heaven beneath the water from the heaven
Above the clouds; and every day I went

Watching its growth and wondering;
And as the day grew hot, methought I saw
A glassy vapour dancing on the pool,
And on it little quaint and filmy shapes,
With dizzy motion, wheel and rise and fall,
Like clouds of gnats with perfect lineaments.
. . . . . .
O friend, sleep was a veil uplift from heaven ...
As if heaven dawned upon the world of dream ...
When darkness rose on the extinguished day
Out of the eastern wilderness.

Indian

I too
Have found a moment's paradise in sleep
Half compensate a hell of waking sorrow.

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

SWIFT as a spirit hastening to his task
Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth
Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask
Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth;
The smokeless altars of the mountain snows
Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth

Of light the Ocean's orison arose,
To which the birds tempered their matin lay.

All flowers in field or forest, which unclose
Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,
Swinging their censers in the element,
With orient incense lit by the new ray

Burned slow and inconsumably, and sent
Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air;
And, in succession due, did continent,

Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear
The form and character of mortal mould,
Rise, as the Sun their father rose, to bear

Their portion of the toil which he of old
Took as his own and then imposed on them.
But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem
The cone of night, now they were laid asleep
Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

Which an old chestnut flung athwart the steep
Of a green Apennine. Before me fled
The night; behind me rose the day; the deep

Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head;
When a strange trance over my fancy grew
Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread

Was so transparent that the scene came through, The
As clear as when a vale of light is drawn Triumph
O'er evening hills they glimmer; and I knew of Life

That I had felt the freshness of that dawn
Bathe in the same cold dew my brow and hair,
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn

Under the self-same bough, and heard as there
The birds, the fountains and the ocean hold
Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air.
And then a vision on my brain was rolled.

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay,
This was the tenour of my waking dream.
Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick strewn with summer dust; & a great stream
Of people there was hurrying to and fro,
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,

All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why
He made one of the multitude, and so

Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky
One of the million leaves of summer's bier.
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,

Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear;

Some flying from the thing they feared, and some
Seeking the object of another's fear;

And others, as with steps towards the tomb,
Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath;
And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walked, and called it death;
And some fled from it as it were a ghost,
Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath;

But more, with motions which each other crost
Pursued or shunned the shadows the clouds threw
Or birds within the noonday æther lost,

Upon that path where flowers never grew, ...
And, weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,
Heard not the fountains whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells for ever burst,
Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told
Of grassy paths and wood-lawns interspersed

With overarching elms, and caverns cold,
And violet banks where sweet dreams brood; but they
Pursued their serious folly as of old.

And, as I gazed, methought that in the way
The throng grew wilder, as the woods of June
When the south wind shakes the extinguished day;

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon
But icy cold, obscured with blinding light
The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon,

When on the sunlit limits of the night
Her white shell trembles amid crimson air,
And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might...

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear
The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim form
Bends in dark æther from her infant's chair;...

So came a chariot on the silent storm
Of its own rushing splendour; and a Shape
So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,
Crouching within the shadow of a tomb;
And o'er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint æthereal gloom
Tempering the light. Upon the chariot-beam
A Janus-visaged Shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-wingèd team;
The shapes which drew it in thick lightnings
Were lost... I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings.
All the four faces of that charioteer

Had their eyes banded; little profit brings
Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,
Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun,
Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

Of all that is, has been or will be done;
So ill was the car guided... but it past
With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast,
Or seemed to rise, so mighty was the trance,
And saw, like clouds upon the thunder blast,

The million with fierce song and maniac dance
Raging around. Such seemed the jubilee
As when to greet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea
From senate-house, and forum, and theatre,
When upon the free

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stooped to bear.
Nor wanted here the just similitude
Of a triumphal pageant, for, where'er

The chariot rolled, a captive multitude
Was driven; ... all those who had grown old in power
Or misery; all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour
Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,
So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower;

All those whose fame or infamy must grow
Till the great winter lay the form and name
Of this green earth with them for ever low;

All but the sacred few who could not tame
Their spirits to the conquerors, but, as soon
As they had touched the world with living flame,

Fled back like eagles to their native noon,
Or those who put aside the diadem
Of earthly thrones or gems....

Were there, of Athens or Jerusalem,
Were neither mid the mighty captives seen,
Nor mid the ribald crowd that followed them,

Nor those who went before fierce and obscene.
The wild dance maddens in the van; and those
Who lead it, fleet as shadows on the green,

Outspeed the chariot, and without repose
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure
To savage music, wilder as it grows.

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,
Convulsed and on the rapid whirlwinds spun

Of that fierce spirit whose unholy leisure
Was soothed by mischief since the world begun,
Throw back their heads & loose their streaming ha
And, in their dance round her who dims the sun,

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air
As their feet twinkle; they recede, and now,
Bending within each other's atmosphere,

Kindle invisibly, and, as they glow,
Like moths by light attracted and repelled,
Oft to their bright destruction come and go:

Till, like two clouds into one vale impelled
That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle
And die in rain, the fiery band which held

Their natures, snaps, while the shock still may tingle;
One falls and then another in the path
Senseless, nor is the desolation single,

Yet ere I can say WHERE, the chariot hath
Past over them ... nor other trace I find
But as of foam after the ocean's wrath

Is spent upon the desert shore. Behind,
Old men and women foully disarrayed

Shake their grey hairs in the insulting wind

And follow in the dance, with limbs decayed,
Seeking to reach the light which leaves them still
Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will
They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose
Round them and round each other, and fulfil

Their work, and in the dust from whence they rose
Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie,
And past in these performs what in those.

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,
Half to myself I said... "And what is this?
Whose shape is that within the car? And why"...

I would have added..."Is all here amiss?"...
But a voice answered... "Life!"... I turned, and knew
(O heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew
To strange distortion out of the hillside
Was indeed one of that deluded crew;

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide
And white, was but his thin discoloured hair;
And that the holes he vainly sought to hide

Were or had been eyes: ... "If thou canst, forbear
To join the dance, which I had well forborne!"
Said the grim Feature (of my thought aware).

"I will unfold that which to this deep scorn
Led me and my companions, and relate
The progress of the pageant since the morn.

"If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,
Follow it thou even to the night; but I
Am weary." ... Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily
He paused; and ere he could resume, I cried:
"First, who art thou?" ... "Before thy memory,

"I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did, and died,
And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit
Had been with purer nutriment supplied,

"Corruption would not now thus much inherit
Of what was once Rousseau, ... nor this disguise
Stain that which ought to have disdained to wear it;

"If I have been extinguished, yet there rise
A thousand beacons from the spark I bore" ...
"And who are those chained to the car?" "The wise,

"The great, the unforgotten, ... they who wore
Mitres and helms and crowns, or wreaths of light,

Signs of thought's empire over thought; their lore
"Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might
Could not repress the mystery within,
And, for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night

"Caught them ere evening." "Who is he with chin
Upon his breast, and hands crossed on his chain?"
"The child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

"The world, and lost all that it did contain
Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more
Of fame and peace than virtue's self can gain

"Without the opportunity which bore
Him on its eagle pinions to the peak
From which a thousand climbers have before

"Fallen, as Napoleon fell." ... I felt my cheek
Alter, to see the shadow pass away,
Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak,

That every pigmy kicked it as it lay;
And much I grieved to think how power and will
In opposition rule our mortal day,

And why God made irreconcilable
Good and the means of good; and for despair
I half disdained mine eyes' desire to fill

With the spent vision of the times that were
And scarce have ceased to be. "Dost thou behold,"
Said my guide, "those spoilers spoiled, Voltaire,

"Frederick, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold,
And hoary anarchs, demagogues, and sage...
names which the world thinks always old,

"For in the battle Life and they did wage,
She remained conqueror. I was overcome
By my own heart alone, which neither age,

"Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb,
Could temper to its object."... "Let them pass,"
I cried, "the world and its mysterious doom

"Is not so much more glorious than it was,
That I desire to worship those who drew
New figures on its false and fragile glass

"As the old faded." ... "Figures ever new
Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may;
We have but thrown, as those before us threw,

"Our shadows on it as it past away.
But mark how chained to the triumphal chair
The mighty phantoms of an elder day;

"All that is mortal of great Plato there
Expiates the joy and woe his Master knew not;

The star that ruled his doom was far too fair,

"And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,
Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain,
Or age, or sloth, or slavery, could subdue not.

"And near him walk the twain,
The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion
Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.

"The world was darkened beneath either pinion
Of him whom from the flock of conquerors
Fame singled for her thunder-bearing minion;

"The other long outlived both woes and wars,
Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept
The jealous key of truth's eternal doors,

"If Bacon's eagle spirit had not leapt
Like lightning out of darkness ... he compelled
The Proteus shape of Nature, as it slept,

"To wake, and lead him to the caves that held
The treasure of the secrets of its reign.
See the great bards of elder time, who quelled

"The passions which they sung, as by their strain
May well be known: their living melody
Tempers its own contagion to the vein

"Of those who are infected with it. I
Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain!
And so my words have seeds of misery...

. . . . . .

"Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs."
And then he pointed to a company,

'Midst whom I quickly recognized the heirs
Of Cæsar's crime, from him to Constantine;
The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,
And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad;
And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God,
Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven,
Was worshipped, by the world o'er which they strode,

For the true sun it quenched. "Their power was given
But to destroy," replied the leader: "I
Am one of those who have created, even

"If it be but a world of agony."
"Whence camest thou? and whither goest thou?
How did thy course begin?" I said, "and why?

"Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow
Of people, & my heart sick of one sad thought...
Speak!"... "Whence I am, I partly seem to know,

"And how & by what paths I have been brought
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess.
Why this should be, my mind can compass not;

"Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less.
But follow thou, and from spectator turn
Actor or victim in this wretchedness;

"And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn
From thee. Now listen: In the April prime,
When all the forest tips began to burn

"With kindling green, touched by the azure clime
Of the young season, I was laid asleep
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

"Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep;
And from it came a gentle rivulet,
Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep

"Bent the soft grass, and kept for ever wet
The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove
With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget

"All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,
Which they had known before that hour of rest.
A sleeping mother then would dream not of

"Her only child who died upon the breast
At eventide; a king would mourn no more

The crown of which his brows were dispossest

"When the sun lingered o'er his ocean floor
To gild his rival's new prosperity;
Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

"Ills, which, if ills, can find no cure from thee,
The thought of which no other sleep will quell,
Nor other music blot from memory, ...

"So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell;
And whether life had been before that sleep
The heaven which I imagine, or a hell

"Like this harsh world in which I wake to weep,
I know not. I arose, and for a space
The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,

"Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace
Of light diviner than the common sun
Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

"Was filled with magic sounds woven into one
Oblivious melody, confusing sense
Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;

"And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence
Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,
And the sun's image radiantly intense

"Burned on the waters of the well that glowed
Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze
With winding paths of emerald fire. There stood

"Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze
Of his own glory, on the vibrating
Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

"A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling
Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,
And the invisible rain did ever sing

"A silver music on the mossy lawn;
And still before me on the dusky grass,
Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn:

"In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,
Mantling with bright Nepenthe; the fierce splendour
Fell from her as she moved under the mass

"Of the deep cavern, and, with palms so tender
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow,
Glided along the river, and did bend her

"Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow,
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream
That whispered with delight to be its pillow.

"As one enamoured is upborne in dream
O'er lily-paven lakes 'mid silver mist,

To wondrous music, so this Shape might seem

"Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed
The dancing foam; partly to glide along
The air which roughened the moist amethyst,

"Or the faint morning beams that fell among
The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees;
And her feet, ever to the ceaseless song

"Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and be
And falling drops, moved in a measure new
Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze

"Up from the lake a shape of golden dew
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,
Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew;

"And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune
To which they moved, seemed as they moved to blo
The thoughts of him who gazed on them; and soon

"All that was, seemed as if it had been not;
And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath
Her feet like embers; & she, thought by thought,

"Trampled its sparks into the dust of death,
As Day upon the threshold of the east
Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath

"Of darkness re-illumine even the least
Of heaven's living eyes; like day she came,
Making the night a dream; and ere she ceased

"To move, as one between desire and shame
Suspended, I said... 'If, as it doth seem,
Thou comest from the realm without a name,

"'Into this valley of perpetual dream,
Show whence I came, and where I am, & why...
Pass not away upon the passing stream.'

"'Arise and quench thy thirst,' was her reply.
As a shut lily stricken by the wand
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

"I rose; and, bending at her sweet command,
Touched with faint lips the cup she raised,
And suddenly my brain became as sand

"Where the first wave had more than half erased
The track of deer on desert Labrador,
Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,

"Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore
Until the second bursts; so on my sight
Burst a new Vision, never seen before,

"And the fair Shape waned in the coming light,
As veil by veil the silent splendour drops

From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite
"Of sunrise, ere it tinge the mountain tops;
And as the presence of that fairest planet,
Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

"That his day's path may end as he began it,
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it,

"Or the soft note in which his dear lament
The Brescian shepherd breathes, or the caress
That turned his weary slumber to content;

"So knew I in that light's severe excess
The presence of that Shape which on the stream
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

"More dimly than a day-appearing dream,
The ghost of a forgotten form of sleep,
A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam

"Through the sick day, in which we wake to weep,
Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost;
So did that Shape its obscure tenour keep

"Beside my path, as silent as a ghost.
But the new Vision, and the cold bright car,
With solemn speed and stunning music, crost

"The forest; and, as if from some dread war
Triumphantly returning, the loud million
Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star.

"A moving arch of victory, the vermilion
And green and azure plumes of Iris had
Built high over her wind-wingèd pavilion;

"And underneath æthereal glory clad
The wilderness; and far before her flew
The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

"Shadow to fall from leaf and stone. The crew
Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance
Within a sunbeam. Some upon the new

"Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance
The grassy vesture of the desert, played,
Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance;

"Others stood gazing, till within the shade
Of the great mountain its light left them dim;
Others outspeeded it; and others made

"Circles around it, like the clouds that swim
Round the high moon in a bright sea of air;
And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

"The chariot and the captives fettered there:
But all like bubbles on an eddying flood

Fell into the same track at last, and were

"Borne onward. I among the multitude
Was swept. Me, sweetest flowers delayed not long;
Me, not the shadow nor the solitude;

"Me, not that falling stream's Lethean song;
Me, not the phantom of that early Form
Which moved upon its motion; but among

"The thickest billows of that living storm
I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime
Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.

"Before the chariot had begun to climb
The opposing steep of that mysterious dell,
Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

"Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,
Through every paradise and through all glory,
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

"The words of hate and awe; the wondrous story
How all things are transfigured except Love;
For deaf as is a sea which wrath makes hoary,

"The world can hear not the sweet notes that move
The sphere whose light is melody to lovers,...
A wonder worthy of his rhyme. The grove

"Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers; The
The earth was grey with phantoms; and the air Triumph
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers of Life

"A flock of vampire-bats before the glare
Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening,
Strange night upon some Indian isle. Thus were

"Phantoms diffused around; and some did fling
Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,
Behind them; some like eaglets on the wing

"Were lost in the white day; others like elves
Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes
Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves;

"And others sate chattering like restless apes
On vulgar hands, ...
Some made a cradle of the ermined capes

"Of kingly mantles; some across the tiar
Of pontiffs sate like vultures; others played
Under the crown which girt with empire

"A baby's or an idiot's brow, and made
Their nests in it. The old anatomies
Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

"Of demon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes
To reassume the delegated power,

Arrayed in which those worms did monarchize

"Who made this earth their charnel. Others more
Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist
Of common men, and round their heads did soar;

"Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist
On evening marshes, thronged about the brow
Of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist;

"And others, like discoloured flakes of snow,
On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair,
Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

"Which they extinguished; and, like tears, they were
A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained
In drops of sorrow. I became aware

"Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained
The track in which we moved. After brief space,
From every form the beauty slowly waned;

"From every firmest limb and fairest face
The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left
The action and the shape without the grace

"Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft
With care; and in those eyes where once hope shone,
Desire, like a lioness bereft

"Of her last cub, glared ere it died; each one
Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly
These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

"In autumn evening from a poplar tree.
Each like himself and like each other were
At first; but some, distorted, seemed to be

"Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air;
And of this stuff the car's creative ray
Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there,

"As the sun shapes the clouds. Thus on the way
Mask after mask fell from the countenance
And form of all; and, long before the day

"Was old, the joy, which waked like heaven's glance
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died;
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,

"And fell, as I have fallen, by the wayside;...
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows past,
And least of strength and beauty did abide."

"Then, what is life? I cried."...

MINOR FRAGMENTS.

HOME.

DEAR home, thou scene of earliest hopes and joys,
The least of which wronged Memory ever makes
Bitterer than all thine unremembered tears.

FRAGMENT OF A GHOST STORY.



SHOVEL of his ashes took
From the hearth's obscurest nook,
Muttering mysteries as she went.
Helen and Henry knew that Granny
Was as much afraid of ghosts as any,
And so they followed hard...
But Helen clung to her brother's arm,
And her own spasm made her shake.

TO MARY.



MARY dear, that you were here
With your brown eyes bright and clear,
And your sweet voice, like a bird
Singing love to its lone mate
In the ivy bower disconsolate;

Voice the sweetest ever heard!
And your brow more
Than the sky
Of this azure Italy.
Mary dear, come to me soon,
I am not well whilst thou art far;
As sunset to the spherèd moon,
As twilight to the western star,
Thou, belovèd, art to me.

O Mary dear, that you were here!
The Castle echo whispers "Here!"

TO MARY.

THE world is dreary,
And I am weary
Of wandering on without thee,
Mary;
A joy was erewhile
In thy voice and thy smile,
And 'tis gone, when I should be gone too, Mary.

TO MARY.

MY dearest Mary, wherefore hast
thou gone,
And left me in this dreary world
alone!
Thy form is here indeed ... a
lovely one ...
But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road,

To Mary

That leads to Sorrow's most obscure abode;
Thou sittest on the hearth of pale despair,
Where
For thine own sake I cannot follow thee.

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

With what truth may I say ...
Roma! Roma! Roma!
Non è più come era prima!



Y lost William, thou in whom
Some bright spirit lived, and did
That decaying robe consume
Which its lustre faintly hid,
Here its ashes find a tomb;
But beneath this pyramid
Thou art not ... if a thing divine
Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine
Is thy mother's grief and mine.

Where art thou, my gentle child?
Let me think thy spirit feeds,
With its life intense and mild,
The love of living leaves and weeds
Among these tombs and ruins wild;
Let me think that through low seeds
Of sweet flowers and sunny grass
Into their hues and scents may pass
A portion....

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

THY little footsteps on the sands
Of a remote and lonely shore;
The twinkling of thine infant hands
Where now the worm will feed no more;
Thy mingled look of love and glee
When we returned to gaze on thee...

TO CONSTANTIA.

THE rose that drinks the fountain dew
In the pleasant air of noon,
Grows pale and blue with altered hue
In the gaze of the nightly moon;
For the planet of frost, so cold and bright,
Makes it wan with her borrowed light.

Such is my heart... roses are fair,
And that at best a withered blossom;
But thy false care did idly wear
Its withered leaves in a faithless bosom;
And fed with love, like air and dew,
Its growth

TO EMILIA VIVIANI.



MADONNA, wherefore hast
thou sent to me
Sweet-basil and mignonette?
Embleming love and health,
which never yet
In the same wreath might be.
Alas, and they are wet!
Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?
For never rain or dew
Such fragrance drew
From plant or flower ... the very doubt endears
My sadness ever new,
The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed for thee.

Send the stars light, but send not love to me,
In whom love ever made
Health like a heap of embers soon to fade.

TO ....

O MIGHTY mind, in whose deep stream this age
Shakes like a reed in the unheeding storm,
Why dost thou curb not thine own sacred rage?

SONNET TO BYRON.

(I am afraid these verses will not please you, but)



IF I esteemed you less, Envy
would kill
Pleasure, and leave to Wonder &
Despair
The ministration of the thoughts
that fill

The mind which, like a worm whose life may share
A portion of the unapproachable,
Marks your creations rise as fast and fair
As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.
But such is my regard that nor your power
To soar above the heights where others
Nor fame, that shadow of the unborn hour
Cast from the envious future on the time,
Move one regret for his unhonoured name
Who dares these words: the worm beneath the sod
May lift itself in homage of the God.

A LOST LEADER.

MY head is wild with weeping for a grief
Which is the shadow of a gentle mind.
I walk into the air (but no relief
To seek, ... or haply, if I sought, to find;
It came unsought); ... to wonder that a chief
Among men's spirits should be cold and blind.

ON KEATS: WHO DESIRED THAT ON HIS TOMB SHOULD BE IN-SCRIBED ...

HERE lieth One whose name was writ on water!"
But, ere the breath that could erase it blew,
Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,

On Keats

Death, the immortalizing winter, flew
Athwart the stream, and time's printless torrent grew
A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name
Of Adonais...

TO....

FOR me, my friend, if not that tears did tremble
In my faint eyes, and that my heart beat fast
With feelings which make rapture pain resemble,
Yet, from thy voice that falsehood starts aghast,
I thank thee... let the tyrant keep
His chains and tears, yea let him weep
With rage to see thee freshly risen,
Like strength from slumber, from the prison,
In which he vainly hoped the soul to bind
Which on the chains must prey that fetter humankind.

MILTON'S SPIRIT.

I DREAMED that Milton's spirit rose, and took
From life's green tree his Uranian lute;
And from his touch sweet thunder flowed, and shook
All human things built in contempt of man,

And sanguine thrones & impious altars quaked,
Prisons and citadels ...

"MIGHTY EAGLE."



IGHTY eagle! thou that soarest
O'er the misty mountain forest,
And amid the light of morning
Like a cloud of glory hiest,
And when night descends defiest
The embattled tempests' warning!

LAUREL.



HAT art thou, presumptuous, who profanest
The wreath to mighty poets only due,
Even whilst like a forgotten moon thou wanest?
Touch not those leaves which for the eternal few
Who wander o'er the paradise of fame,
In sacred dedication ever grew:
One of the crowd thou art without a name."
"Ah, friend, 'tis the false laurel that I wear.
Bright though it seem, it is not the same
As that which bound Milton's immortal hair:
Its dew is poison; and the hopes that quicken
Under its chilling shade, though seeming fair,
Are flowers which die almost before they sicken."

TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.



EOPLE of England, ye who toil
and groan,
Who reap the harvests which are
not your own,
Who weave the clothes which
your oppressors wear,
And for your own take the inclement air;
Who build warm houses....
And are like gods who give them all they have,
And nurse them from the cradle to the grave....
. . . . . .
What men gain fairly, that they should possess;
And children may inherit idleness,
From him who earns it... This is understood;
Private injustice may be general good.
But he who gains by base and armèd wrong,
Or guilty fraud, or base compliances,
May be despoiled; even as a stolen dress
Is stript from a convicted thief, and he
Left in the nakedness of infamy.

ROME.

ROME has fallen; ye see it lying
Heaped in undistinguished ruin:
Nature is alone undying.

TO ITALY.



S the sunrise to the night,
As the north wind to the clouds,
As the earthquake's fiery flight,
Ruining mountain solitudes,
Everlasting Italy,
Be those hopes and fears on thee.

"UNRISEN SPLENDOUR."



NRISEN splendour of the
brightest sun,
To rise upon our darkness,
if the star
Now beckoning thee out of thy
misty throne
Could thaw the clouds which wage an obscure war
With thy young brightness!

TO ZEPHYR.

COME, thou awakener of the spirit's ocean,
Zephyr, whom to thy cloud or cave
No thought can trace! speed with thy gentle motion!

"FOLLOW."



OLLOW to the deep wood's
weeds,
Follow to the wild briar dingle,
Where we seek to intermingle,
And the violet tells her tale
To the odour-scented gale,

"Follow" For they two have enough to do
Of such work as I and you.

THE RAIN-WIND.

THE gentleness of rain was in the wind

RAIN.

THE fitful alternations of the rain,
When the chill wind, languid as with pain
Of its own heavy moisture, here and there
Drives through the grey and beamless
atmosphere.

"WHEN SOFT WINDS."



HEN soft winds and sunny skies
With the green earth harmonize,
And the young and dewy dawn,
Bold as an unhunted fawn,
Up the windless heaven is gone, ...
Laugh ... for, ambushed in the day,
Clouds and whirlwinds watch their prey.

THE VINE.



LOURISHING vine, whose
kindling clusters glow
Beneath the autumnal sun, none
taste of thee;
For thou dost shroud a ruin, and
below
The rotting bones of dead antiquity.

THE WANING MOON.



ND like a dying lady, lean & pale,
Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
The moon arose up in the murky East,
A white and shapeless mass.

TO THE MOON.



RIGHT wanderer, fair coquette of heaven,
To whom alone it has been given
To change and be adored for ever,
Envy not this dim world, for never
But once within its shadow grew
One fair as....

TO THE MOON.



RT thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

To the Moon

Thou chosen sister of the spirit,
That gazes on thee till in thee it pities....

POETRY AND MUSIC.

HOW sweet it is to sit and read the tales
Of mighty poets, and to hear the while
Sweet music, which when the attention fails
Fills the dim pause...

"A GENTLE STORY."



GENTLE story of two lovers young,
Who met in innocence and died in sorrow,
And of one selfish heart, whose rancour clung
Like curses on them; are ye slow to borrow
The lore of truth from such a tale?
Or in this world's deserted vale,
Do ye not see a star of gladness
Pierce the shadows of its sadness,
When ye are cold, that love is a light sent
From heaven, which none shall quench, to cheer the innocent?

THE LADY OF THE SOUTH.

FAINT with love, the Lady of the South
Lay in the paradise of Lebanon
Under a heaven of cedar boughs; the drouth
Of love was on her lips; the light was gone
Out of her eyes.

THE TALE UNTOLD.

ONE sung of thee who left the tale untold,
Like the false dawns which perish in the bursting:
Like empty cups of wrought and dædal gold,
Which mock the lips with air, when they are thirsting.

WINE OF EGLANTINE.



AM drunk with the honey wine
Of the moon-unfolded eglantine,
Which fairies catch in hyacinth bowls:
The bats, the dormice, and the moles
Sleep in the walls or under the sward
Of the desolate Castle yard;
And when 'tis spilt on the summer earth
Or its fumes arise among the dew,
Their jocund dreams are full of mirth,
They gibber their joy in sleep; for few
Of the fairies bear those bowls so new!

A ROMAN'S CHAMBER.



N the cave which wild weeds cover
Wait for thine æthereal lover;
For the pallid moon is waning,
O'er the spiral cypress hanging,
And the moon no cloud is staining.

A Roman's Chamber

It was once a Roman's chamber,...
And the wild weeds twine and clamber,
Where he kept his darkest revels;
It was then a chasm for devils.

SONG OF THE FURIES.



HEN a lover clasps his fairest,
Then be our dread sport the rarest.
Their caresses were like the chaff
In the tempest, and be our laugh
His despair... her epitaph!
When a mother clasps her child,
Watch till dusty Death has piled
His cold ashes on the clay;
She has loved it many a day...
She remains,... it fades away.

"THE RUDE WIND IS SINGING."

THE rude wind is singing
The dirge of the music dead;
The cold worms are clinging
Where kisses were lately fed.

BEFORE AND AFTER.

THE babe is at peace within the womb;
The corpse is at rest within the tomb:
We begin in what we end.

THE SHADOW OF HELL.

A GOLDEN-WINGÈD Angel stood
Before the Eternal Judgment-seat:
His looks were wild, and Devils' blood
Stained his dainty hands and feet.
The Father and the Son
Knew that strife was now begun.
They knew that Satan had broken his chain,
And with millions of demons in his train,
Was ranging over the world again.
Before the Angel had told his tale,
A sweet and a creeping sound
Like the rushing of wings was heard around;
And suddenly the lamps grew pale...
The lamps, before the Archangels seven...
That burn continually in heaven.

CONSEQUENCE.

THE viewless and invisible Consequence
Watches thy goings-out, and comings-in,
And....hovers o'er thy guilty sleep,
Unveiling every new-born deed, and thoughts
More ghastly than those deeds.

A HATE-SONG.

A HATER he came and sat by a ditch,
And he took an old cracked lute;

A Hate-Song

And he sang a song which was more of a screech
'Gainst a woman that was a brute.

A FACE.

HIS face was like a snake's ... wrinkled and loose
And withered.

THE POET'S LOVER.



AM as a spirit who has dwelt
Within his heart of hearts, and I have felt
His feelings, and have thought his thoughts, and known
The inmost converse of his soul, the tone
Unheard but in the silence of his blood,
When all the pulses in their multitude
Image the trembling calm of summer seas.
I have unlocked the golden melodies
Of his deep soul, as with a master-key,
And loosened them and bathed myself therein ...
Even as an eagle in a thunder-mist
Clothing his wings with lightning.

"I WOULD NOT BE A KING."



WOULD not be a king ...
enough
Of woe it is to love;
The path to power is steep and rough,
And tempests reign above.

I would not climb the imperial throne;
'Tis built on ice which fortune's sun
Thaws in the height of noon.
Then farewell, king, yet were I one,
Care would not come so soon.
Would he and I were far away
Keeping flocks on Himalay!

"IS IT THAT IN SOME BRIGHTER SPHERE."



S it that in some brighter sphere
We part from friends we meet with here?
Or do we see the Future pass
Over the Present's dusky glass?
Or what is that that makes us seem
To patch up fragments of a dream,
Part of which comes true, and part
Beats and trembles in the heart?

TO-DAY.

AND who feels discord now or sorrow?
Love is the universe to-day;
These are the slaves of dim to-morrow,
Darkening Life's labyrinthine way.

LOVE'S ATMOSPHERE.

THERE is a warm and gentle atmosphere
About the form of one we love, and thus

Love's Atmosphere

As in a tender mist our spirits are
Wrapt in the of that which is to us
The health of life's own life.

TORPOR.

MY head is heavy, my limbs are weary,
And it is not life that makes me move.

"WAKE THE SERPENT NOT."



AKE the serpent not ... lest he
Should not know the way to go;
Let him crawl which yet lies sleeping
Through the deep grass of the meadow!
Not a bee shall hear him creeping,
Not a may-fly shall awaken,
From its cradling blue-bell shaken,
Not the starlight as he's sliding
Through the grass with silent gliding.

"IS NOT TO-DAY ENOUGH?"



S not to-day enough? Why do I peer
Into the darkness of the day to come?
Is not to-morrow even as yesterday?
And will the day that follows change thy doom?
Few flowers grow upon thy wintry way;

And who waits for thee in that cheerless home
Whence thou hast fled, whither thou must return
Charged with the load that makes thee faint and mourn?

"TO THIRST AND FIND NO FILL."



O thirst and find no fill... to wail and wander
With short uneasy steps... to pause and ponder...
To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle
Where busy thought and blind sensation mingle;
To nurse the image of unfelt caresses
Till dim imagination just possesses
The half-created shadow.

LOVE.



EALTH and dominion fade into the mass
Of the great sea of human right and wrong,
When once from our possession they must pass;
But love, though misdirected, is among
The things which are immortal, and surpass
All that frail stuff which will be... or which was.

MUSIC.



PANT for the music which is divine,
My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;
Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,
Loosen the notes in a silver shower;
Like a herbless plain for the gentle rain,
I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,
More, oh, more, ... I am thirsting yet;
It loosens the serpent which care has bound
Upon my heart to stifle it;
The dissolving strain, through every vein,
Passes into my heart and brain.

As the scent of a violet withered up,
Which grew by the brink of a silver lake,
When the hot noon has drained its dewy cup,
And mist there was none its thirst to slake...
And the violet lay dead while the odour flew
On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue...

As one who drinks from a charmèd cup
Of foaming, and sparkling & murmuring wine,
Whom, a mighty enchantress filling up,
Invites to love with her kiss divine...

. . . . . .

TO ONE SINGING.

MY spirit like a charmèd bark doth swim
Upon the liquid waves of thy sweet singing,
Far away into the regions dim
Of rapture... as a boat, with swift sails winging
Its way adown some many-winding river.

TO MUSIC.

SILVER key of the fountain of tears,
Where the spirit drinks till the brain is wild;
Softest grave of a thousand fears,
Where their mother, Care, like a drowsy child,
Is laid asleep in flowers.

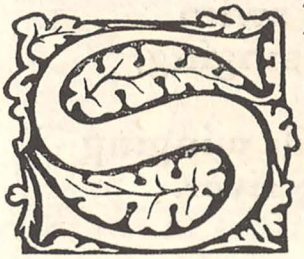
TO MUSIC.

NO, Music, thou art not the "food of Love,"
Unless Love feeds upon its own sweet self,
Till it becomes all Music murmurs of.

"I FAINT, I PERISH WITH MY LOVE!"

I FAINT, I perish with my love! I grow
Frail as a cloud whose pale
Under the evening's ever-changing glow:
I die like mist upon the gale,
And like a wave under the calm I fail.

TO SILENCE.



ILENCE! Oh, well are Death
and Sleep and Thou
Three brethren named, the guardians gloomy-winged
Of one abyss, where life, & truth, and joy
Are swallowed up ... yet spare me, Spirit, pity me,
Until the sounds I hear become my soul,
And it has left these faint and weary limbs,
To track along the lapses of the air
This wandering melody until it rests
Among lone mountains in some....

"OH, THAT A CHARIOT OF CLOUD WERE MINE!"



H, that a chariot of cloud were mine!
Of cloud which the wild tempest weaves in air,
When the moon over the ocean's line
Is spreading the locks of her bright grey hair.
Oh, that a chariot of cloud were mine!
I would sail on the waves of the billowy wind
To the mountain peak and the rocky lake,
And the....

"THE FIERCE BEASTS."

THE fierce beasts of the woods & wildernesses
Track not the steps of him who drinks of it;
For the light breezes, which for ever fleet
Around its margin, heap the sand thereon.

HE WANDERS.

HE wanders, like a day-appearing dream,
Through the dim wildernesses of the mind;
Through desert woods and tracts, which seem
Like ocean, homeless, boundless, unconfined.

THE DESERTS OF SLEEP.

I WENT into the deserts of dim sleep...
That world which, like an unknown wilderness,
Bounds this with its recesses wide and deep.

A DREAM.

METHOUGHT I was a billow in the crowd
Of common men, that stream without a shore,
That ocean which at once is deaf and loud;
That I, a man, stood amid many more
By a wayside which the aspect bore
Of some imperial metropolis,
Where mighty shapes... pyramid, dome, and tower...
Gleamed like a pile of crags.

THE HEART'S TOMB.



ND where is truth? On tombs? for such to thee
Has been my heart... and thy dead memory
Has lain from childhood, many a changeful year,
Unchangingly preserved and buried there.

HOPE, FEAR, AND DOUBT.



UCH hope, as is the sick despair of good,
Such fear, as is the certainty of ill,
Such doubt, as is pale Expectation's food
Turned while she tastes to poison, when the will
Is powerless, and the spirit....

"ALAS! THIS IS NOT WHAT I THOUGHT LIFE WAS."



LAS! this is not what I thought life was.
I knew that there were crimes and evil men,
Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass
Untouched by suffering, through the rugged glen.
In mine own heart I saw as in a glass
The hearts of others And when

I went among my kind, with triple brass
Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,
To bear scorn, fear, and hate, a woful mass!

CROWNED.

AND that I walk thus proudly crowned withal
Is that 'tis my distinction; if I fall,
I shall not weep out of the vital day,
To-morrow dust, nor wear a dull decay.

"GREAT SPIRIT."

GREAT Spirit whom the sea of boundless thought
Nurtures within its unimagined caves,
In which thou sittest sole, as in my mind,
Giving a voice to its mysterious waves.

"O THOU IMMORTAL DEITY."

O THOU immortal deity
Whose throne is in the depth of human thought,
I do adjure thy power and thee
By all that man may be, by all that he is not,
By all that he has been and yet must be!

"YE GENTLE VISITATIONS."

YE gentle visitations of calm thought,
Moods like the memories of happier earth,
Which come arrayed in thoughts
of little worth,
Like stars in clouds by the weak
winds enwrought, ...

But that the clouds depart and stars remain,
While they remain, and ye, alas, depart!

"MY THOUGHTS."



Y thoughts arise and fade in solitude,
The verse that would invest them melts away
Like moonlight in the heaven of spreading day:
How beautiful they were, how firm they stood,
Flecking the starry sky like woven pearl!

TRANSLATIONS.

HYMN TO MERCURY. FROM THE GREEK OF HOMER.

SING, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove,
The Herald-child, king of Arcadia
And all its pastoral hills, whom, in sweet love
Having been inter-woven, modest May
Bore Heaven's dread Supreme. An antique grove
Shadowed the cavern where the lovers lay
In the deep night, unseen by Gods or Men,
And white-armed Juno slumbered sweetly then.

Now, when the joy of Jove had its fulfilling,
And Heaven's tenth moon chronicled her relief,
She gave to light a babe all babes excelling,
A schemer subtle beyond all belief,
A shepherd of thin dreams, a cow-stealing,
A night-watching, and door-waylaying thief,
Who 'mongst the Gods was soon about to thieve,
And other glorious actions to achieve.

The babe was born at the first peep of day;
He began playing on the lyre at noon,
And the same evening did he steal away
Apollo's herds. The fourth day of the moon,
On which him bore the venerable May,
From her immortal limbs he leaped full soon,
Nor long could in the sacred cradle keep,
But out to seek Apollo's herds would creep.

Out of the lofty cavern wandering
He found a tortoise, and cried out... "A treasure!"
(For Mercury first made the tortoise sing)
The beast before the portal at his leisure
The flowery herbage was depasturing,
Moving his feet in a deliberate measure
Over the turf. Jove's profitable son
Eyeing him laughed, and laughing thus begun:

"A useful godsend are you to me now,
King of the dance, companion of the feast,
Lovely in all your nature! Welcome, you
Excellent plaything! Where, sweet mountain beast,
Got you that speckled shell? Thus much I know,
You must come home with me and be my guest;
You will give joy to me, and I will do
All that is in my power to honour you.

"Better to be at home than out of door,
So come with me; and though it has been said

That you alive defend from magic power,
I know you will sing sweetly when you're dead."
Thus having spoken, the quaint infant bore,
Lifting it from the grass on which it fed
And grasping it in his delighted hold,
His treasured prize into the cavern old.

Then, scooping with a chisel of grey steel,
He bored the life and soul out of the beast.
Not swifter a swift thought of woe or weal
Darts through the tumult of a human breast
Which thronging cares annoy ... not swifter wheel
The flashes of its torture and unrest
Out of the dizzy eyes ... than Maia's son
All that he did devise hath featly done.

And through the tortoise's hard stony skin
At proper distances small holes he made,
And fastened the cut stems of reeds within,
And with a piece of leather overlaid
The open space and fixed the cubits in,
Fitting the bridge to both, and stretched o'er all
Symphonious cords of sheep-gut rhythmical.

When he had wrought the lovely instrument,
He tried the chords, and made division meet,
Preluding with the plectrum, and there went
Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet
Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent
A strain of unpremeditated wit

Hymn to Mercury

Joyous and wild and wanton ... such you may
Hear among revellers on a holiday.

He sung how Jove and May of the bright sandal
Dallied in love not quite legitimate;
And his own birth, still scoffing at the scandal
And naming his own name, did celebrate;
His mother's cave & servant maids he planned all
In plastic verse, her household stuff and state,
Perennial pot, trippet, and brazen pan, ...
But singing, he conceived another plan.

Seized with a sudden fancy for fresh meat,
He in his sacred crib deposited
The hollow lyre, and from the cavern sweet
Rushed with great leaps up to the mountain's head,
Revolving in his mind some subtle feat
Of thievish craft, such as a swindler might
Devise in the lone season of dun night.

Lo! the great Sun under the ocean's bed has
Driven steeds and chariot. The child meanwhile strode
O'er the Pierian mountains clothed in shadows,
Where the immortal oxen of the God
Are pastured in the flowering unmown meadows
And safely stalled in a remote abode.
The archer Argicide, elate and proud,
Drove fifty from the herd, lowing aloud.

He drove them wandering o'er the sandy way,
But, being ever mindful of his craft,
Backward and forward drove he them astray,
So that the tracks which seemed before, were aft;
His sandals then he threw to the ocean spray,
And for each foot he wrought a kind of raft
Of tamarisk and tamarisk-like sprigs,
And bound them in a lump with withy twigs.

And on his feet he tied these sandals light,
The trail of whose wide leaves might not betray
His track; and then, a self-sufficing wight,
Like a man hastening on some distant way,
He from Pieria's mountain bent his flight;
But an old man perceived the infant pass
Down green Onchestus heaped like beds with grass.

The old man stood dressing his sunny vine.
"Halloo! old fellow with the crookèd shoulder!
You grub those stumps? before they will bear wine
Methinks even you must grow a little older.
Attend, I pray, to this advice of mine,
As you would 'scape what might appal a bolder:
Seeing, see not ... and hearing, hear not ... and ...
If you have understanding, understand."

So saying, Hermes roused the oxen vast;
O'er shadowy mountain and resounding dell
And flower-paven plains great Hermes passed;
Till the black night divine, which favouring fell

Around his steps, grew grey, and morning fast
Wakened the world to work, and from her cell
Sea-strewn the Pallantean Moon sublime
Into her watch-tower just began to climb.

Now to Alpheus he had driven all
The broad-foreheaded oxen of the Sun;
They came unwearied to the lofty stall
And to the water troughs which ever run
Through the fresh fields; and when with rush-grass tall,
Lotus and all sweet herbage, every one
Had pastured been, the great God made them move
Towards the stall in a collected drove.

A mighty pile of wood the God then heaped,
And, having soon conceived the mystery
Of fire, from two smooth laurel branches stript
The bark, & rubbed them in his palms; on high
Suddenly forth the burning vapour leapt,
And the divine child saw delightedly.
Mercury first found out for human weal
Tinder-box, matches, fire-irons, flint and steel.

And fine dry logs and roots innumerous
He gathered in a delve upon the ground...
And kindled them ... and instantaneous
The strength of the fierce flame was breathed around;
And, whilst the might of glorious Vulcan thus

Wrapt the great pile with glare & roaring sound, Hymn to
Hermes dragged forth two heifers, lowing loud, Mercury
Close to the fire... such might was in the God.

And on the earth upon their backs he threw
The panting beasts, and rolled them o'er and o'er,
And bored their lives out. Without more ado
He cut up fat and flesh, and down before
The fire, on spits of wood he placed the two,
Toasting their flesh and ribs, and all the gore
Pursed in the bowels; and while this was done
He stretched their hides over a craggy stone.

We mortals let an ox grow old, and then
Cut it up after long consideration,...
But joyous-minded Hermes from the glen
Drew the fat spoils to the more open station
Of a flat smooth space, and portioned them; and when
He had by lot assigned to each a ration
Of the twelve Gods, his mind became aware
Of all the joys which in religion are.

For the sweet savour of the roasted meat
Tempted him though immortal. Natheless
He checked his haughty will and did not eat,
Though what it cost him words can scarce express,
And every wish to put such morsels sweet
Down his most sacred throat he did repress;
But soon within the lofty portalled stall
He placed the fat and flesh and bones and all.

And every trace of the fresh butchery
And cooking, the God soon made disappear,
As if it all had vanished through the sky;
He burned the hoofs and horns and head and hair,...
The insatiate fire devoured them hungrily;
And, when he saw that everything was clear,
He quenched the coals, and trampled the black dust,
And in the stream his bloody sandals tossed.

All night he worked in the serene moonshine.
But when the light of day was spread abroad
He sought his natal mountain-peaks divine.
On his long wandering, neither man nor god
Had met him, since he killed Apollo's kine,
Nor house-dog had barked at him on his road;
Now he obliquely through the key-hole past,
Like a thin mist or an autumnal blast.

Right through the temple of the spacious cave
He went with soft light feet, as if his tread
Fell not on earth; no sound their falling gave;
Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread
The swaddling-clothes about him; and the knave
Lay playing with the covering of the bed
With his left hand about his knees... the right
Held his belovèd tortoise-lyre tight.

There he lay innocent as a new-born child,
As gossips say; but though he was a god,
The goddess, his fair mother, unbeguiled

Knew all that he had done being abroad. Hymn to
"Whence come you, & from what adventure wild, Mercury
You cunning rogue, and where have you abode
All the long night, clothed in your impudence?
What have you done since you departed hence?

"Apollo soon will pass within this gate
And bind your tender body in a chain
Inextricably tight, and fast as fate,
Unless you can delude the God again,
Even when within his arms. Ah, runagate!
A pretty torment both for gods and men
Your father made when he made you!" ..."Dear
mother,"
Replied sly Hermes, "wherefore scold & bother?

"As if I were like other babes as old,
And understood nothing of what is what,
And cared at all to hear my mother scold.
I in my subtle brain a scheme have got,
Which whilst the sacred stars round Heaven are
rolled
Will profit you and me; nor shall our lot
Be as you counsel, without gifts or food,
To spend our lives in this obscure abode.

"But we will leave this shadow-peopled cave
And live among the Gods, and pass each day
In high communion, sharing what they have
Of profuse wealth and unexhausted prey;

And from the portion which my father gave
To Phœbus, I will snatch my share away;
Which if my father will not, natheless I,
Who am the king of robbers, can but try.

"And, if Latona's son should find me out,
I'll countermine him by a deeper plan;
I'll pierce the Pythian temple-walls, though stout,
And sack the fane of everything I can...
Caldrons and tripods of great worth no doubt,
Each golden cup and polished brazen pan,
All the wrought tapestries and garments gay."
So they together talked. Meanwhile the Day,

Æthereal born, arose out of the flood
Of flowing Ocean, bearing light to men.
Apollo passed toward the sacred wood,
Which from the inmost depths of its green glen
Echoes the voice of Neptune; and there stood,
On the same spot in green Onchestus then,
That same old animal, the vine-dresser,
Who was employed hedging his vineyard there.

Latona's glorious Son began: "I pray
Tell, ancient hedger of Onchestus green,
Whether a drove of kine has passed this way,
All heifers with crook'd horns? for they have been
Stolen from the herd in high Pieria,
Where a black bull was fed apart, between
Two woody mountains in a neighbouring glen,

And four fierce dogs watched there, unanimous as men.

"And what is strange, the author of this theft
Has stolen the fatted heifers every one,
But the four dogs and the black bull are left.
Stolen they were last night at set of sun,
Of their soft beds and their sweet food bereft.
Now tell me, man born ere the world begun,
Have you seen any one pass with the cows?"
To whom the man of overhanging brows:

"My friend, it would require no common skill
Justly to speak of everything I see;
On various purposes of good or ill
Many pass by my vineyard, and to me
'Tis difficult to know the invisible
Thoughts, which in all those many minds may be.
Thus much alone I certainly can say,
I tilled these vines till the decline of day,

"And then I thought I saw, but dare not speak
With certainty of such a wondrous thing,
A child, who could not have been born a week,
Those fair-horned cattle closely following,
And in his hand he held a polished stick:
And, as on purpose, he walked wavering
From one side to the other of the road,
And with his face opposed the steps he trod."

Apollo hearing this, passed quickly on...
No wingèd omen could have shown more clear
That the deceiver was his father's son.
So the God wraps a purple atmosphere
Around his shoulders, and like fire is gone
To famous Pylos, seeking his kine there,
And found their track and his, yet hardly cold,
And cried... "What wonder do mine eyes behold!

"Here are the footsteps of the hornèd herd
Turned back towards their fields of asphodel;
But THESE are not the tracks of beast or bird,
Grey wolf, or bear, or lion of the dell,
Or manèd Centaur... sand was never stirred
By man or woman thus! Inexplicable!
Who with unwearied feet could e'er impress
The sand with such enormous vestiges?

"That was most strange... but this is stranger still!"
Thus having said, Phœbus impetuously
Sought high Cyllene's forest-cinctured hill,
And the deep cavern where dark shadows lie,
And where the ambrosial nymph with happy will
Bore the Saturnian's love-child, Mercury;
And a delightful odour from the dew
Of the hill pastures, at his coming, flew.

And Phœbus stooped under the craggy roof
Arched over the dark cavern. Maia's child
Perceived that he came angry, far aloof,

About the cows of which he had been beguiled;
And over him the fine and fragrant woof
Of his ambrosial swaddling clothes he piled,
As among firebrands lies a burning spark
Covered, beneath the ashes cold and dark.

There, like an infant who had sucked his fill
And now was newly washed and put to bed,
Awake, but courting sleep with weary will,
And gathered in a lump, hands, feet, and head,
He lay, and his belovèd tortoise still
He grasped, and held under his shoulder-blade.
Phœbus the lovely mountain-goddess knew,
Not less her subtle, swindling baby, who

Lay swathed in his sly wiles. Round every crook
Of the ample cavern for his kine Apollo
Looked sharp; and when he saw them not, he took
The glittering key, and opened three great hollow
Recesses in the rock, where many a nook
Was filled with the sweet food immortals swallow;
And mighty heaps of silver and of gold
Were piled within ... a wonder to behold!

And white and silver robes, all overwrought
With cunning workmanship of tracery sweet;
Except among the Gods there can be nought
In the wide world to be compared with it.
Latona's offspring, after having sought
His herds in every corner, thus did greet

Great Hermes: "Little cradled rogue, declare
Of my illustrious heifers, where they are!

"Speak quickly! or a quarrel beween us
Must rise, and the event will be that I
Shall hurl you into dismal Tartarus,
In fiery gloom to dwell eternally;
Nor shall your father nor your mother loose
The bars of that black dungeon; utterly
You shall be cast out from the light of day,
To rule the ghosts of men, unblessed as they."

To whom thus Hermes slyly answered: "Son
Of great Latona, what a speech is this!
Why come you here to ask me what is done
With the wild oxen which it seems you miss?
I have not seen them, nor from any one
Have heard a word of the whole business;
If you should promise an immense reward,
I could not tell more than you now have heard.

"An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong,
And I am but a little new-born thing,
Who, yet at least, can think of nothing wrong.
My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling
The cradle-clothes about me all day long, ...
Or half asleep, hear my sweet mother sing,
And to be washed in water clean and warm,
And hushed and kissed and kept secure from harm.

"Oh, let not e'er this quarrel be averred! Hymn to
The astounded Gods would laugh at you, if e'er Mercury
You should allege a story so absurd
As that a new-born infant forth could fare
Out of his home after a savage herd.
I was born yesterday ... my small feet are
Too tender for the roads so hard and rough.
And if you think that this is not enough,

"I swear a great oath, by my father's head,
That I stole not your cows, and that I know
Of no one else, who might, or could, or did.
Whatever things cows are I do not know,
For I have only heard the name." This said,
He winked as fast as could be, and his brow
Was wrinkled, and a whistle loud gave he,
Like one who hears some strange absurdity.

Apollo gently smiled and said: "Aye, aye,
You cunning little rascal, you will bore
Many a rich man's house, and your array
Of thieves will lay their siege before his door,
Silent as night, in night; and many a day
In the wild glens rough shepherds will deplore
That you or yours, having an appetite,
Met with their cattle, comrade of the night!

"And this among the Gods shall be your gift,
To be considered as the lord of those
Who swindle, house-break, sheep-steal, & shop-lift;

But now if you would not your last sleep doze,
Crawl out!" ... Thus saying, Phœbus did uplift
The subtle infant in his swaddling clothes,
And in his arms, according to his wont,
A scheme devised the illustrious Argiphont.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

And sneezed and shuddered. Phœbus on the grass
Him threw; and whilst all that he had designed
He did perform ... eager although to pass,
Apollo darted from his mighty mind
Towards the subtle babe the following scoff:
"Do not imagine this will get you off,

"You little swaddled child of Jove and May!"
And seized him: "By this omen I shall trace
My noble herds, and you shall lead the way."
Cyllenian Hermes from the grassy place,
Like one in earnest haste to get away,
Rose, and with hands lifted towards his face,
Round both his ears up from his shoulders drew
His swaddling clothes, and ... "What mean you to do

"With me, you unkind God?" said Mercury:
"Is it about these cows you tease me so?
I wish the race of cows were perished! ... I
Stole not your cows ... I do not even know
What things cows are. Alas! I well may sigh
That since I came into this world of woe

I should have ever heard the name of one... Hymn to
But I appeal to the Saturnian's throne." Mercury

Thus Phœbus and the vagrant Mercury
Talked without coming to an explanation,
With adverse purpose. As for Phœbus, he
Sought not revenge, but only information,
And Hermes tried with lies and roguery
To cheat Apollo. But when no evasion
Served... for the cunning one his match had found...
He paced on first over the sandy ground.

He of the Silver Bow the child of Jove
Followed behind, till to their heavenly Sire
Came both his children, beautiful as Love,
And from his equal balance did require
A judgment in the cause wherein they strove.
O'er odorous Olympus and its snows
A murmuring tumult as they came arose,

And from the folded depths of the great Hill,
While Hermes and Apollo reverent stood
Before Jove's throne, the indestructible
Immortals rushed in mighty multitude;
And whilst their seats in order due they fill,
The lofty Thunderer in a careless mood
To Phœbus said: "Whence drive you this sweet prey,
This herald-baby, born but yesterday?...

"A most important subject, trifler, this

To lay before the Gods!"... "Nay, father, nay,
When you have understood the business,
Say not that I alone am fond of prey.
I found this little boy in a recess
Under Cyllene's mountains far away...
A manifest and most apparent thief,
A scandal-monger beyond all belief.

"I never saw his like either in heaven
Or upon earth for knavery or craft:
Out of the field my cattle yester-even,
By the low shore on which the loud sea laughed,
He right down to the river-ford had driven;
And mere astonishment would make you daft
To see the double kind of footsteps strange
He has impressed wherever he did range.

"The cattle's track on the black dust full well
Is evident, as if they went towards
The place from which they came...that asphodel
Meadow, in which I feed my many herds;
HIS steps were most incomprehensible.
I know not how I can describe in words
Those tracks; he could have gone along the sands
Neither upon his feet nor on his hands;

"He must have had some other stranger mode
Of moving on: those vestiges immense,
Far as I traced them on the sandy road,
Seemed like the trail of oak-toppings: but thence

No mark or track denoting where they trod
The hard ground gave: but, working at his fence,
A mortal hedger saw him as he past
To Pylos, with the cows, in fiery haste.

"I found that in the dark he quietly
Had sacrificed some cows, and before light
Had thrown the ashes all dispersedly
About the road; then, still as gloomy night,
Had crept into his cradle, either eye
Rubbing, and cogitating some new sleight.
No eagle could have seen him as he lay
Hid in his cavern from the peering day.

"I taxed him with the fact, when he averred
Most solemnly that he did neither see
Nor even had in any manner heard
Of my lost cows, whatever things cows be;
Nor could he tell, though offered a reward,
Not even who could tell of them to me."
So speaking, Phœbus sate; and Hermes then
Addressed the supreme Lord of Gods and Men:

"Great Father, you know clearly beforehand
That all which I shall say to you is sooth;
I am a most veracious person, and
Totally unacquainted with untruth.
At sunrise Phœbus came, but with no band
Of Gods to bear him witness, in great wrath,
To my abode, seeking his heifers there,

And saying that I must show him where they are,

"Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss.
I know that every Apollonian limb
Is clothed with speed and might and manliness,
As a green bank with flowers... but, unlike him,
I was born yesterday, and you may guess
He well knew this when he indulged the whim
Of bullying a poor little new-born thing
That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

"Am I like a strong fellow who steals kine?
Believe me, dearest Father... such you are...
This driving of the herds is none of mine;
Across my threshold did I wander ne'er,
So may I thrive! I reverence the divine
Sun and the Gods, and I love you, and care
Even for this hard accuser... who must know
I am as innocent as they or you.

"I swear by these most gloriously-wrought portals
(It is, you will allow, an oath of might)
Through which the multitude of the Immortals
Pass and repass for ever, day and night,
Devising schemes for the affairs of mortals,
That I am guiltless; and I will requite,
Although mine enemy be great and strong,
His cruel threat... do thou defend the young!"

So speaking, the Cyllenian Argiphont

Winked, as if now his adversary was fitted;
And Jupiter according to his wont
Laughed heartily to hear the subtle-witted
Infant give such a plausible account,
And every word a lie. But he remitted
Judgment at present, and his exhortation
Was, to compose the affair by arbitration.

And they by mighty Jupiter were bidden
To go forth with a single purpose both,
Neither the other chiding nor yet chidden;
And Mercury with innocence and truth
To lead the way, and show where he had hidden
The mighty heifers. Hermes, nothing loath,
Obeyed the Ægis-bearer's will... for he
Is able to persuade all easily.

These lovely children of Heaven's highest Lord
Hastened to Pylos and the pastures wide
And lofty stalls by the Alphean ford,
Where wealth in the mute night is multiplied
With silent growth. Whilst Hermes drove the herd
Out of the stony cavern, Phœbus spied
The hides of those the little babe had slain,
Stretched on the precipice above the plain.

"How was it possible," then Phœbus said,
"That you, a little child, born yesterday,
A thing on mother's milk and kisses fed,
Could two prodigious heifers ever flay?

Even I myself may well hereafter dread
Your prowess, offspring of Cyllenian May,
When you grow strong and tall." He spoke, & bound
Stiff withy bands the infant's wrists around.

He might as well have bound the oxen wild;
The withy bands, though starkly interknit,
Fell at the feet of the immortal child,
Loosened by some device of his quick wit.
Phœbus perceived himself again beguiled,
And stared, while Hermes sought some hole or pit,
Looking askance and winking fast as thought,
Where he might hide himself and not be caught,

Sudden he changed his plan, and with strange skill
Subdued the strong Latonian by the might
Of winning music, to his mightier will;
His left hand held the lyre, and in his right
The plectrum struck the chords; unconquerable
Up from beneath his hand in circling flight
The gathering music rose... and sweet as Love
The penetrating notes did live and move

Within the heart of great Apollo. He
Listened with all his soul, and laughed for pleasure.
Close to his side stood harping fearlessly
The unabashèd boy; and to the measure
Of the sweet lyre there followed loud and free
His joyous voice; for he unlocked the treasure
Of his deep song, illustrating the birth
Of the bright Gods and the dark desert Earth;

And how to the Immortals every one
A portion was assigned of all that is;
But chief Mnemosyne did Maia's son
Clothe in the light of his loud melodies;
And, as each God was born or had begun,
He in their order due and fit degrees
Sung of his birth and being... and did move
Apollo to unutterable love.

These words were wingèd with his swift delight:
"You heifer-stealing schemer, well do you
Deserve that fifty oxen should requite
Such minstrelsies as I have heard even now.
Comrade of feasts, little contriving wight,
One of your secrets I would gladly know,
Whether the glorious power you now show forth
Was folded up within you at your birth,

"Or whether mortal taught or God inspired
The power of unpremeditated song?
Many divinest sounds have I admired,
The Olympian Gods and mortal men among;
But such a strain of wondrous, strange, untired,
And soul-awakening music, sweet and strong,
Yet did I never hear except from thee,
Offspring of May, impostor Mercury!

"What Muse, what skill, what unimagined use,
What exercise of subtlest art, has given
Thy songs such power? for those who hear may choose

From three, the choicest of the gifts of Heaven,
Delight, and love, and sleep ... sweet sleep whose dews
Are sweeter than the balmy tears of even.
And I, who speak this praise, am that Apollo
Whom the Olympian Muses ever follow;

"And their delight is dance, and the blithe noise
Of song and overflowing poesy:
And sweet, even as desire, the liquid voice
Of pipes, that fills the clear air thrillingly;
But never did my inmost soul rejoice
In this dear work of youthful revelry,
As now. I wonder at thee, son of Jove;
Thy harpings and thy song are soft as love.

"Now since thou hast, although so very small,
Science of arts so glorious, thus I swear,
And let this cornel javelin, keen and tall,
Witness between us what I promise here,
That I will lead thee to the Olympian Hall,
Honoured and mighty, with thy mother dear,
And many glorious gifts in joy will give thee,
And even at the end will ne'er deceive thee."

To whom thus Mercury with prudent speech:
"Wisely hast thou inquired of my skill;
I envy thee no thing I know to teach
Even this day; for both in word and will
I would be gentle with thee; thou canst reach
All things in thy wise spirit, and thy sill

Is highest in heaven among the sons of Jove,
Who loves thee in the fulness of his love.

"The Counsellor Supreme has given to thee
Divinest gifts, out of the amplitude
Of his profuse, exhaustless treasury;
By thee, 'tis said, the depths are understood
Of his far voice; by thee the mystery
Of all oracular fates, and the dread mood
Of the diviner is breathed up; even I,
A child, perceive thy might and majesty.

"Thou canst seek out and compass all that wit
Can find or teach. Yet since thou wilt, come take
The lyre, be mine the glory giving it,
Strike the sweet chords, & sing aloud, and wake
Thy joyous pleasure out of many a fit
Of trancèd sound, and with fleet fingers make
Thy liquid-voicèd comrade talk with thee,
It can talk measured music eloquently.

"Then bear it boldly to the revel loud,
Love-wakening dance, or feast of solemn state,
A joy by night or day; for those endowed
With art and wisdom who interrogate
It teaches, babbling in delightful mood
All things which make the spirit most elate,
Soothing the mind with sweet familiar play,
Chasing the heavy shadows of dismay.

"To those who are unskilled in its sweet tongue,
Though they should question most impetuously
Its hidden soul, it gossips something wrong,
Some senseless and impertinent reply.
But thou who art as wise as thou art strong
Canst compass all that thou desirest. I
Present thee with this music-flowing shell,
Knowing thou canst interrogate it well.

"And let us two henceforth together feed
On this green mountain-slope & pastoral plain,
The herds in litigation. They will breed
Quickly enough to recompense our pain,
If to the bulls and cows we take good heed;
And thou, though somewhat over fond of gain,
Grudge me not half the profit." Having spoke,
The shell he proffered, and Apollo took;

And gave him in return the glittering lash,
Installing him as herdsman; from the look
Of Mercury then laughed a joyous flash.
And then Apollo with the plectrum strook
The chords, and from beneath his hands a crash
Of mighty sounds rushed up, whose music shook
The soul with sweetness, and like an adept
His sweeter voice a just accordance kept.

The herd went wandering o'er the divine mead,
Whilst these most beautiful Sons of Jupiter
Won their swift way up to the snowy head

Of white Olympus, with the joyous lyre
Soothing their journey; and their father dread
Gathered them both into familiar
Affection sweet, and then, and now, and ever,
Hermes must love Him of the Golden Quiver,

To whom he gave the lyre that sweetly sounded,
Which skilfully he held and played thereon.
He piped the while, and far and wide rebounded
The echo of his pipings; every one
Of the Olympians sat with joy astounded;
While he conceived another piece of fun,
One of his old tricks, which the God of Day
Perceiving, said: "I fear thee, Son of May;

"I fear thee and thy sly chameleon spirit,
Lest thou shouldst steal my lyre and crookèd bow;
This glory and power thou dost from Jove inherit,
To teach all craft upon the earth below;
Thieves love and worship thee, it is thy merit
To make all mortal business ebb and flow
By roguery. Now, Hermes, if you dare
By sacred Styx a mighty oath to swear

"That you will never rob me, you will do
A thing extremely pleasing to my heart."
Then Mercury sware by the Stygian dew,
That he would never steal his bow or dart,
Or lay his hands on what to him was due,
Or ever would employ his powerful art

Against his Pythian fane. Then Phœbus swore
There was no God or man whom he loved more.

"And I will give thee as a good-will token,
The beautiful wand of wealth and happiness;
A perfect three-leaved rod of gold unbroken,
Whose magic will thy footsteps ever bless;
And whatsoever by Jove's voice is spoken
Of earthly or divine from its recess,
It, like a loving soul, to thee will speak,
And more than this, do thou forbear to seek.

"For, dearest child, the divinations high
Which thou requirest, 'tis unlawful ever
That thou or any other deity
Should understand, and vain were the endeavour;
For they are hidden in Jove's mind, and I
In trust of them have sworn that I would never
Betray the counsels of Jove's inmost will
To any God... the oath was terrible.

"Then, golden-wanded brother, ask me not
To speak the fates by Jupiter designed;
But be it mine to tell their various lot
To the unnumbered tribes of humankind.
Let good to these and ill to those be wrought
As I dispense. But he, who comes consigned
By voice and wings of perfect augury
To my great shrine, shall find avail in me.

"Him will I not deceive, but will assist;
But he who comes relying on such birds
As chatter vainly, who would strain and twist
The purpose of the Gods with idle words,
And deems their knowledge light, he shall have missed
His road, whilst I among my other hoards
His gifts deposit. Yet, O son of May,
I have another wondrous thing to say.

"There are three Fates, three virgin Sisters, who,
Rejoicing in their wind-outspeeding wings,
Their heads with flour snowed over white and new,
Sit in a vale round which Parnassus flings
Its circling skirts; from these I have learned true
Vaticinations of remotest things.
My father cared not. Whilst they search out dooms,
They sit apart and feed on honeycombs.

"They, having eaten the fresh honey, grow
Drunk with divine enthusiasm, and utter
With earnest willingness the truth they know;
But if deprived of that sweet food, they mutter
All plausible delusions. These to you
I give; if you inquire, they will not stutter.
Delight your own soul with them: any man
You would instruct may profit if he can.

"Take these and the fierce oxen, Maia's child;
O'er many a horse and toil-enduring mule,
O'er jagged-jawèd lions, and the wild
White-tuskèd boars, o'er all, by field or pool,
Of cattle which the mighty Mother mild
Nourishes in her bosom, thou shalt rule;
Thou dost alone the veil from death uplift;
Thou givest not, yet this is a great gift."

Thus King Apollo loved the child of May
In truth, and Jove covered their love with joy.
Hermes with Gods and men even from that day
Mingled, and wrought the latter much annoy,
And little profit, going far astray
Through the dun night. Farewell, delightful Boy,
Of Jove and Maia sprung, never by me,
Nor thou, nor other songs, shall unremembered be.

HOMER'S HYMN TO VENUS.

(V. 1-55, with some omissions.)



USE, sing the deeds of golden Aphrodite,
Who wakens with her smile the lulled delight
Of sweet desire, taming the eternal kings
Of Heaven, and men, and all the living things
That fleet along the air, or whom the sea,
Or earth, with her maternal ministry,

Nourish innumerable, thy delight
All seek O crownèd Aphrodite!
Three spirits canst thou not deceive or quell,
Minerva, child of Jove, who loves too well
Fierce war and mingling combat, and the fame
Of glorious deeds, to heed thy gentle flame.
Diana, golden-shafted queen,
Is tamed not by thy smiles; the shadows green
Of the wild woods, the bow, the
And piercing cries amid the swift pursuit
Of beasts among waste mountains, such delight
Is hers, and men who know and do the right.
Nor Saturn's first-born daughter, Vesta chaste,
Whom Neptune and Apollo wooed the last,
Such was the will of ægis-bearing Jove;
But sternly she refused the ills of Love,
And by her mighty father's head she swore
An oath not unperformed, that evermore
A virgin she would live 'mid deities
Divine; her father, for such gentle ties
Renounced, gave glorious gifts; thus in his hall
She sits and feeds luxuriously. O'er all
In every fane, her honours first arise
From men, the eldest of Divinities.

Homer's Hymn to Venus

These spirits she persuades not, nor deceives,
But none beside escape, so well she weaves
Her unseen toils; nor mortal men, nor gods
Who live secure in their unseen abodes.
She won the soul of him whose fierce delight

Is thunder, first in glory and in might.
And, as she willed, his mighty mind deceiving,
With mortal limbs his deathless limbs inweaving,
Concealed him from his spouse and sister fair,
Whom to wise Saturn ancient Rhea bare.

but in return,
In Venus Jove did soft desire awaken,
That, by her own enchantments overtaken,
She might, no more from human union free,
Burn for a nursling of mortality.
For once, amid the assembled Deities,
The laughter-loving Venus from her eyes
Shot forth the light of a soft starlight smile,
And boasting said, that she, secure the while,
Could bring at will to the assembled gods
The mortal tenants of earth's dark abodes,
And mortal offspring from a deathless stem
She could produce in scorn and spite of them.
Therefore he poured desire into her breast
Of young Anchises,
Feeding his herds among the mossy fountains
Of the wide Ida's many-folded mountains,
Whom Venus saw, and loved, and the love clung
Like wasting fire her senses wild among.

HOMER'S HYMN TO CASTOR AND POLLUX.

YE wild-eyed Muses, sing the
Twins of Jove,
Whom the fair-ankled Leda,
mixed in love
With mighty Saturn's heaven-
obscuring Child,
On Taygetus, that lofty mountain wild,
Brought forth in joy; mild Pollux void of blame,
And steed-subduing Castor, heirs of fame.
These are the Powers who earth-born mortals save
And ships, whose flight is swift along the wave.
When wintry tempests o'er the savage sea
Are raging, and the sailors tremblingly
Call on the Twins of Jove with prayer and vow,
Gathered in fear upon the lofty prow,
And sacrifice with snow-white lambs, the wind
And the huge billow bursting close behind
Even then beneath the weltering waters bear
The staggering ship, they suddenly appear,
On yellow wings rushing athwart the sky,
And lull the blasts in mute tranquillity,
And strew the waves on the white ocean's bed,
Fair omen of the voyage; from toil and dread,
The sailors rest, rejoicing in the sight,
And plough the quiet sea in safe delight.

HOMER'S HYMN TO MINERVA.



SING the glorious Power with azure eyes,
Athenian Pallas, tameless, chaste, and wise,
Tritogenia, town-preserving maid,
Revered and mighty; from his awful head
Whom Jove brought forth, in warlike armour dressed,
Golden, all radiant! Wonder strange possessed
The everlasting Gods that shape to see,
Shaking a javelin keen, impetuously
Rush from the crest of ægis-bearing Jove;
Fearfully Heaven was shaken, and did move
Beneath the might of the Cerulean-eyed;
Earth dreadfully resounded, far and wide;
And, lifted from its depths, the sea swelled high
In purple billows, the tide suddenly
Stood still, and great Hyperion's son long time
Checked his swift steeds, till where she stood sublime,
Pallas from her immortal shoulders threw
The arms divine; wise Jove rejoiced to view.
Child of the Ægis-bearer, hail to thee,
Nor thine nor others' praise shall unremembered be.

HOMER'S HYMN TO THE SUN.



FFSPRING of Jove, Calliope, once more
To the bright Sun thy hymn of music pour,
Whom to the child of star-clad Heaven and Earth
Euryphaëssa, large-eyed nymph, brought forth;
Euryphaëssa, the famed sister fair
Of great Hyperion, who to him did bear
A race of loveliest children; the young Morn,
Whose arms are like twin roses newly born,
The fair-haired Moon, and the immortal Sun,
Who borne by heavenly steeds his race doth run
Unconquerably, illuming the abodes
Of mortal men and the eternal Gods.

Fiercely look forth his awe-inspiring eyes
Beneath his golden helmet, whence arise
And are shot forth afar clear beams of light;
His countenance with radiant glory bright
Beneath his graceful locks far shines around,
And the light vest with which his limbs are bound,
Of woof æthereal delicately twined,
Glows in the stream of the uplifting wind.
His rapid steeds soon bear him to the west,
Where their steep flight his hands divine arrest,
And the fleet car with yoke of gold, which he
Sends from bright heaven beneath the shadowy sea.

HOMER'S HYMN TO THE MOON.



AUGHTERS of Jove, whose voice is melody,
Muses, who know and rule all minstrelsy!
Sing the wide-wingèd Moon.
Around the earth,
From her immortal head in Heaven shot forth,
Far light is scattered, boundless glory springs;
Where'er she spreads her many-beaming wings,
The lampless air glows round her golden crown.

But when the Moon divine from Heaven is gone
Under the sea, her beams within abide,
Till, bathing her bright limbs in Ocean's tide,
Clothing her form in garments glittering far,
And having yoked to her immortal car
The beam-invested steeds, whose necks on high
Curve back, she drives to a remoter sky
A western Crescent, borne impetuously.
Then is made full the circle of her light,
And as she grows, her beams more bright & bright
Are poured from Heaven, where she is hovering then,
A wonder and a sign to mortal men.

The Son of Saturn with this glorious Power
Mingled in love and sleep, to whom she bore,
Pandeia, a bright maid of beauty rare
Among the Gods whose lives eternal are.

Hail Queen, great Moon, white-armed Divinity,
Fair-haired and favourable! thus with thee,
My song beginning, by its music sweet
Shall make immortal many a glorious feat
Of demigods, ... with lovely lips, so well
Which minstrels, servants of the Muses, tell.

HOMER'S HYMN TO THE EARTH, MOTHER OF ALL.



UNIVERSAL Mother, who dost keep,
From everlasting thy foundations deep,
Eldest of things, Great Earth, I sing of thee!
All shapes that have their dwelling in the sea,
All things that fly, or on the ground divine
Live, move, and there are nourished ... these are thine;
These from thy wealth thou dost sustain; from thee
Fair babes are born, and fruits on every tree
Hang ripe and large, revered Divinity!

The life of mortal men beneath thy sway
Is held; thy power both gives and takes away.
Happy are they whom thy mild favours nourish;
All things unstinted round them grow and flourish.
For them endures the life-sustaining field
Its load of harvest, and their cattle yield
Large increase, and their house with wealth is filled.
Such honoured dwell in cities fair and free,

The homes of lovely women, prosperously;
Their sons exult in youth's new budding gladness,
And their fresh daughters, free from care or sadness,
With bloom-inwoven dance and happy song,
On the soft flowers the meadow-grass among,
Leap round them sporting; such delights by thee
Are given, rich Power, revered Divinity.

Mother of gods, thou wife of starry Heaven,
Farewell! be thou propitious, and be given
A happy life for this brief melody,
Nor thou nor other songs shall unremembered be.

THE CYCLOPS: A SATYRIC DRAMA. TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF EURIPIDES.

Silenus.
Ulysses.
Chorus of Satyrs.
The Cyclops.

Silenus



BACCHUS, what a
world of toil, both now
And ere these limbs
were overworn with age,
Have I endured for thee!
First, when thou fled'st
The mountain-nymphs
who nursed thee, driven
afar
By the strange madness
Juno sent upon thee;
Then in the battle of the sons of Earth,
When I stood foot by foot close to thy side,
No unpropitious fellow-combatant,
And, driving through his shield my wingèd spear,
Slew vast Enceladus. Consider now,
Is it a dream of which I speak to thee?
By Jove it is not, for you have the trophies!
And now I suffer more than all before.
For when I heard that Juno had devised

A tedious voyage for you, I put to sea
With all my children quaint in search of you,
And I myself stood on the beakèd prow
And fixed the naked mast; and all my boys
Leaning upon their oars, with splash and strain
Made white with foam the green and purple sea.
And so we sought you, king. We were sailing
Near Malea, when an eastern wind arose,
And drove us to this wild Ætnean rock;
The one-eyed children of the Ocean God,
The man-destroying Cyclopses, inhabit,
On this wild shore, their solitary caves,
And one of these, named Polypheme, has caught us
To be his slaves; and so, for all delight
Of Bacchic sports, sweet dance and melody,
We keep this lawless giant's wandering flocks.
My sons indeed, on far declivities,
Young things themselves, tend on the youngling sheep,
But I remain to fill the water casks,
Or sweeping the hard floor, or ministering
Some impious and abominable meal
To the fell Cyclops. I am wearied of it!
And now I must scrape up the littered floor
With this great iron rake, so to receive
My absent master and his evening sheep
In a cave neat and clean. Even now I see
My children tending the flocks hitherward.
Ha! what is this? are your Sicinnian measures
Even now the same as when with dance & song
You brought young Bacchus to Althæa's halls?

Strophe.

Chorus of Satyrs

Where has he of race divine
Wandered in the winding rocks?
Here the air is calm and fine
For the father of the flocks;
Here the grass is soft and sweet,
And the river-eddies meet
In the trough beside the cave,
Bright as in their fountain wave.
Neither here, nor on the dew
Of the lawny uplands feeding?
Oh, you come! ... a stone at you
Will I throw to mend your breeding;
Get along, you hornèd thing,
Wild, seditious, rambling!

Epode.

An Iacchic melody
To the golden Aphrodite
Will I lift, as erst did I
Seeking her and her delight
With the Mænads whose white feet
To the music glance and fleet.
Bacchus, O belovèd, where,
Shaking wide thy yellow hair,
Wanderest thou alone, afar?
To the one-eyed Cyclops, we,
Who by right thy servants are,
Minister in misery,
In these wretched goat-skins clad,

Far from thy delights and thee.

Silenus Be silent, sons; command the slaves to drive
The gathered flocks into the rock-roofed cave.
Chorus Go! But what needs this serious haste, O father?
Silenus I see a Grecian vessel on the coast,
And thence the rowers with some general
Approaching to this cave. About their necks
Hang empty vessels, as they wanted food,
And water-flasks. O, miserable strangers!
Whence come they, that they know not what and who
My master is, approaching in ill hour
The inhospitable roof of Polypheme,
And the Cyclopian jaw-bone, man-destroying?
Be silent, Satyrs, while I ask and hear
Whence coming they arrive the Ætnean hill.
Ulysses Friends, can you show me some clear water-spring
The remedy of our thirst? Will any one
Furnish with food seamen in want of it?
Ha! what is this? We seem to be arrived
At the blithe court of Bacchus. I observe
This sportive band of Satyrs near the caves.
First let me greet the elder.... Hail!
Silenus Hail thou
O Stranger! tell thy country and thy race.
Ulysses The Ithacan Ulysses and the king
Of Cephalonia.
Silenus Oh! I know the man,

Wordy and shrewd, the son of Sisyphus.

Ulysses I am the same, but do not rail upon me.

Silenus Whence sailing do you come to Sicily?

Ulysses From Ilion, and from the Trojan toils.

Silenus How touched you not at your paternal shore?

Ulysses The strength of tempests bore me here by force.

Silenus The self-same accident occurred to me.

Ulysses Were you then driven here by stress of weather?

Silenus Following the Pirates who had kidnapped Bacchus.

Ulysses What land is this, and who inhabit it?

Silenus Ætna, the loftiest peak in Sicily.

Ulysses And are there walls, & tower-surrounded towns?

Silenus There are not. These lone rocks are bare of men.

Ulysses And who possess the land? the race of beasts?

Silenus Cyclops, who live in caverns, not in houses.

Ulysses Obeying whom? Or is the state popular?

Silenus Shepherds; no one obeys any in aught.

Ulysses How live they? do they sow the corn of Ceres?

Silenus On milk and cheese, and on the flesh of sheep.

Ulysses Have they the Bromian drink from the vine's stream?

Silenus Ah! no; they live in an ungracious land.

Ulysses And are they just to strangers? hospitable?

Silenus They think the sweetest thing a stranger brings Is his own flesh.

Ulysses What! do they eat man's flesh?

Silenus No one comes here who is not eaten up.

Ulysses The Cyclops now... where is he? Not at home?

Silenus Absent on Ætna, hunting with his dogs.

Ulysses Know'st thou what thou must do to aid us hence?
Silenus I know not; we will help you all we can.
Ulysses Provide us food, of which we are in want.
Silenus Here is not anything, as I said, but meat.
Ulysses But meat is a sweet remedy for hunger.
Silenus Cow's milk there is, and store of curdled cheese.
Ulysses Bring out: I would see all before I bargain.
Silenus But how much gold will you engage to give?
Ulysses I bring no gold, but Bacchic juice.
Silenus Oh, joy!
'Tis long since these dry lips were wet with wine.
Ulysses Maron, the son of the God, gave it me.
Silenus Whom I have nursed a baby in my arms.
Ulysses The son of Bacchus, for your clearer knowledge.
Silenus Have you it now? or is it in the ship?
Ulysses Old man, this skin contains it, which you see.
Silenus Why this would hardly be a mouthful for me.
Ulysses Nay, twice as much as you can draw from thence.
Silenus You speak of a fair fountain, sweet to me.
Ulysses Would you first taste of the unmingled wine?
Silenus 'Tis just; tasting invites the purchaser.
Ulysses Here is the cup, together with the skin.
Silenus Pour: that the draught may fillip my remembrance.
Ulysses See!
Silenus Papaiax? what a sweet smell it has!
Ulysses You see it then?
Silenus By Jove, no! but I smell it.
Ulysses Taste, that you may not praise it in words only.
Silenus Babai! Great Bacchus calls me forth to dance!
Joy! joy!

Ulysses Did it flow sweetly down your throat?
Silenus So that it tingled to my very nails.
Ulysses And in addition I will give you gold.
Silenus Let gold alone! only unlock the cask.
Ulysses Bring out some cheeses now, or a young goat.
Silenus That will I do, despising any master.
Yes, let me drink one cup, and I will give
All that the Cyclops feed upon their mountains.

. . . . . .

Chorus Ye have taken Troy and laid your hands on Helen?
Ulysses And utterly destroyed the race of Priam.

. . . . . .

Silenus The wanton wretch! she was bewitched to see
The many-coloured anklets and the chain
Of woven gold which girt the neck of Paris,
And so she left that good man Menelaus.
There should be no more women in the world
But such as are reserved for me alone.
See, here are sheep, and here are goats, Ulysses,
Here are unsparing cheeses of pressed milk;
Take them; depart with what good speed ye may;
First leaving my reward, the Bacchic dew
Of joy-inspiring grapes.
Ulysses Ah me! Alas!
What shall we do? the Cyclops is at hand!
Old man, we perish! whither can we fly?
Silenus Hide yourselves quick within that hollow rock.
Ulysses 'Twere perilous to fly into the net.
Silenus The cavern has recesses numberless;
Hide yourselves quick.

Ulysses That will I never do!
The mighty Troy would be indeed disgraced
If I should fly one man. How many times
Have I withstood, with shield immovable,
Ten thousand Phrygians! if I needs must die,
Yet will I die with glory; if I live,
The praise which I have gained will yet remain.
Silenus What, ho! assistance, comrades, haste assistance!
The Cyclops, Silenus, Ulysses; Chorus.
Cyclops What is this tumult? Bacchus is not here,
Nor tympanies nor brazen castanets.
How are my young lambs in the cavern? Milking
Their dams or playing by their sides? And is
The new cheese pressed into the bulrush baskets?
Speak! I'll beat some of you till you rain tears.
Look up, not downwards when I speak to you.
Silenus See! I now gape at Jupiter himself;
I stare upon Orion and the stars.
Cyclops Well, is the dinner fitly cooked and laid?
Silenus All ready, if your throat is ready too.
Cyclops Are the bowls full of milk besides?
Silenus O'erbrimming;
So you may drink a tunful if you will.
Cyclops Is it ewe's milk or cow's milk, or both mixed?
Silenus Both, either; only pray don't swallow me.
Cyclops By no means....
. . . . . .
What is this crowd I see beside the stalls?
Outlaws or thieves? for near my cavern-home,
I see my young lambs coupled two by two

With willow bands; mixed with my cheeses lie
Their implements; and this old fellow here
Has his bald head broken with stripes.

Silenus Ah me!
I have been beaten till I burn with fever.

Cyclops By whom? Who laid his fist upon your head?

Silenus Those men, because I would not suffer them
To steal your goods.

Cyclops Did not the rascals know
I am a God, sprung from the race of heaven?

Silenus I told them so, but they bore off your things,
And ate the cheese in spite of all I said,
And carried out the lambs ... and said, moreover,
They'd pin you down with a three-cubit collar,
And pull your vitals out through your one eye,
Torture your back with stripes, then binding you
Throw you as ballast into the ship's hold,
And then deliver you, a slave, to move
Enormous rocks, or found a vestibule.

Cyclops In truth? Nay, haste, and place in order quickly
The cooking knives, and heap upon the hearth,
And kindle it, a great faggot of wood.
As soon as they are slaughtered, they shall fill
My belly, broiling warm from the live coals,
Or boiled and seethed within the bubbling caldron.
I am quite sick of the wild mountain game;
Of stags and lions I have gorged enough,
And I grow hungry for the flesh of men.
Nay, master, something new is very pleasant

Silenus After one thing for ever, and of late

Very few strangers have approached our cave.

Ulysses Hear, Cyclops, a plain tale on the other side.
We, wanting to buy food, came from our ship
Into the neighbourhood of your cave, and here
This old Silenus gave us in exchange
These lambs for wine, the which he took & drank,
And all by mutual compact, without force.
There is no word of truth in what he says,
For slyly he was selling all your store.

Silenus I? May you perish, wretch...

Ulysses If I speak false!

Silenus Cyclops, I swear by Neptune who begot thee,
By mighty Triton and by Nereus old,
Calypso and the glaucous ocean nymphs,
The sacred waves and all the race of fishes...
Be these the witnesses, my dear sweet master,
My darling little Cyclops, that I never
Gave any of your stores to these false strangers.
If I speak false may those whom most I love,
My children, perish wretchedly!

Chorus There stop!
I saw him giving these things to the strangers.
If I speak false, then may my father perish,
But do not thou wrong hospitality.

Cyclops You lie! I swear that he is juster far
Than Rhadamanthus. I trust more in him.
But let me ask, whence have ye sailed, O strangers?
Who are you? And what city nourished ye?

Ulysses Our race is Ithacan; having destroyed
The town of Troy, the tempests of the sea

Have driven us on thy land, O Polypheme.

Cyclops What, have ye shared in the unenvied spoil
Of the false Helen, near Scamander's stream?

Ulysses The same, having endured a woful toil.

Cyclops Oh, basest expedition! sailed ye not
From Greece to Phrygia for one woman's sake?

Ulysses 'Twas the Gods' work... no mortal was in fault.
But, O great offspring of the Ocean-king,
We pray thee and admonish thee with freedom
That thou dost spare thy friends who visit thee,
And place no impious food within thy jaws.
For in the depths of Greece we have upreared
Temples to thy great father, which are all
His homes. The sacred bay of Tænarus
Remains inviolate, and each dim recess
Scooped high on the Malean promontory,
And aëry Sunium's silver-veinèd crag
Which divine Pallas keeps unprofaned ever,
The Gerastian asylums, and whate'er
Within wide Greece our enterprise has kept
From Phrygian contumely; and in which
You have a common care, for you inhabit
The skirts of Grecian land, under the roots
Of Ætna and its crags, spotted with fire.
Turn then to converse under human laws,
Receive us shipwrecked suppliants, and provide
Food, clothes, and fire, and hospitable gifts;
Nor fixing upon oxen-piercing spits
Our limbs, so fill your belly and your jaws.
Priam's wide land has widowed Greece enough;

And weapon-wingèd murder heaped together
Enough of dead, and wives are husbandless,
And ancient women and grey fathers wail
Their childless age. If you should roast the rest...
And 'tis a bitter feast that you prepare...
Where then would any turn? Yet be persuaded;
Forego the lust of your jaw-bone; prefer
Pious humanity to wicked will:
Many have bought too dear their evil joys.

Silenus Let me advise you, do not spare a morsel
Of all his flesh. If you should eat his tongue
You would become most eloquent, O Cyclops.

Cyclops Wealth, my good fellow, is the wise man's God;
All other things are a pretence and boast.
What are my father's ocean promontories,
The sacred rocks whereon he dwells, to me?
Stranger, I laugh to scorn Jove's thunderbolt,
I know not that his strength is more than mine.
As to the rest I care not. When he pours
Rain from above, I have a close pavilion
Under this rock, in which I lie supine,
Feasting on a roast calf or some wild beast,
And drinking pans of milk, and gloriously
Emulating the thunder of high heaven.
And when the Thracian wind pours down the snow,
I wrap my body in the skins of beasts,
Kindle a fire, and bid the snow whirl on.
The earth, by force, whether it will or no,
Bringing forth grass, fattens my flocks and herds,

Which, to what other God but to myself
And this great belly, first of deities,
Should I be bound to sacrifice? I well know
The wise man's only Jupiter is this,
To eat and drink during his little day,
And give himself no care. And as for those
Who complicate with laws the life of man,
I freely give them tears for their reward.
I will not cheat my soul of its delight,
Or hesitate in dining upon you:
And that I may be quit of all demands,
These are my hospitable gifts; ... fierce fire
And yon ancestral cauldron, which o'er-bubbling
Shall finely cook your miserable flesh.
Creep in! ...

. . . . . .

Ulysses Ai! ai! I have escaped the Trojan toils,
I have escaped the sea, and now I fall
Under the cruel grasp of one impious man.
O Pallas, mistress, Goddess sprung from Jove,
Now, now, assist me! Mightier toils than
Troy
Are these. I totter on the chasms of peril.
And thou too who inhabitest the thrones
Of the bright stars, look, hospitable Jove,
Upon this outrage of thy deity,
Otherwise be considered as no God!

Chorus, alone For your gaping gulf, and your gullet wide
The ravin is ready on every side,

The limbs of the strangers are cooked and done;
There is boiled meat, and roast meat, and meat
from the coal,
You may chop it, and tear it, and gnash it for fun,
An hairy goat's-skin contains the whole.
Let me but escape, and ferry me o'er
The stream of your wrath to a safer shore.
The Cyclops Ætnean is cruel and bold,
He murders the strangers
That sit on his hearth,
And dreads no avengers
To rise from the earth.
He roasts the men before they are cold,
He snatches them broiling from the coal,
And from the cauldron pulls them whole,
And minces their flesh and gnaws their bone
With his cursèd teeth, till all be gone.
Farewell, foul pavilion:
Farewell, rites of dread!
The Cyclops vermilion,
With slaughter uncloying,
Now feasts on the dead,
In the flesh of strangers joying!

Ulysses O Jupiter! I saw within the cave
Horrible things; deeds to be feigned in words,
But not to be believed as being done.

Chorus What! sawest thou the impious Polypheme
Feasting upon your loved companions now?

Ulysses Selecting two, the plumpest of the crowd,

He grasped them in his hands....

Chorus Unhappy man!

. . . . . .

Ulysses Soon as we came into this craggy place,
Kindling a fire, he cast on the broad hearth
The knotty limbs of an enormous oak,
Three waggon-loads at least, and then he strewed
Upon the ground, beside the red firelight,
His couch of pine leaves; & he milked the cows,
And, pouring forth the white milk, filled a bowl
Three cubits wide and four in depth, as much
As would contain ten amphoræ, and bound it
With ivy wreaths; then placed upon the fire
A brazen pot to boil, and made red hot
The points of spits, not sharpened with the sickle,
But with a fruit tree bough, and with the jaws
Of axes for Ætnean slaughterings.
And when this God-abandoned cook of hell
Had made all ready, he seized two of us
And killed them in a kind of measured manner;
For he flung one against the brazen rivets
Of the huge cauldron, and seized the other
By the foot's tendon, and knocked out his brains
Upon the sharp edge of the craggy stone;
Then peeled his flesh with a great cooking-knife
And put him down to roast. The other's limbs
He chopped into the cauldron to be boiled.
And I, with the tears raining from my eyes,
Stood near the Cyclops, ministering to him;
The rest, in the recesses of the cave,

Clung to the rock like bats, bloodless with fear.
When he was filled with my companions' flesh,
He threw himself upon the ground and sent
A loathsome exhalation from his maw.
Then a divine thought came to me. I filled
The cup of Maron, and I offered him
To taste, and said: "Child of the Ocean God,
Behold what drink the vines of Greece produce,
The exultation and the joy of Bacchus."
He, satiated with his unnatural food,
Received it, and at one draught drank it off,
And, taking my hand, praised me: "Thou hast given
A sweet draught after a sweet meal, dear guest."
And I perceiving that it pleased him, filled
Another cup, well knowing that the wine
Would wound him soon and take a sure revenge.
And the charm fascinated him, and I
Plied him cup after cup, until the drink
Had warmed his entrails, and he sang aloud
In concert with my wailing fellow-seamen
A hideous discord... and the cavern rung.
I have stolen out, so that if you will
You may achieve my safety and your own.
But say, do you desire, or not, to fly
This uncompanionable man, and dwell
As was your wont among the Grecian Nymphs
Within the fanes of your belovèd God?
Your father there within agrees to it,
But he is weak and overcome with wine,
And, caught as if with bird-lime by the cup,

He claps his wings and crows in doting joy.
You who are young escape with me, and find
Bacchus your ancient friend; unsuited he
To this rude Cyclops.

Chorus Oh, my dearest friend,
That I could see that day, and leave for ever
The impious Cyclops.

. . . . . .

Ulysses Listen then what a punishment I have
For this fell monster, how secure a flight
From your hard servitude.

Chorus O sweeter far
Than is the music of an Asian lyre
Would be the news of Polypheme destroyed.

Ulysses Delighted with the Bacchic drink he goes
To call his brother Cyclops, who inhabit
A village upon Ætna not far off.

Chorus I understand, catching him when alone
You think by some measure to dispatch him,
Or thrust him from the precipice.

Ulysses O no;
Nothing of that kind; my device is subtle.

Chorus How then? I heard of old that thou wert wise.

Ulysses I will dissuade him from this plan, by saying
It were unwise to give the Cyclopses
This precious drink, which if enjoyed alone
Would make life sweeter for a longer time.
When, vanquished by the Bacchic power, he sleeps,
There is a trunk of olive wood within,

Whose point having made sharp with this good sword
I will conceal in fire, and when I see
It is alight, will fix it, burning yet,
Within the socket of the Cyclops' eye
And melt it out with fire; as when a man
Turns by its handle a great auger round,
Fitting the framework of a ship with beams,
So will I, in the Cyclops' fiery eye
Turn round the brand and dry the pupil up.

Chorus Joy! I am mad with joy at your device.

Ulysses And then with you, my friends, and the old man,
We'll load the hollow depth of our black ship,
And row with double strokes from this dread shore.

Chorus May I, as in libations to a God,
Share in the blinding him with the red brand?
I would have some communion in his death.

Ulysses Doubtless; the brand is a great brand to hold.

Chorus Oh! I would lift an hundred waggon-loads,
If like a wasp's nest I could scoop the eye out
Of the detested Cyclops.
Silence now!

Ulysses Ye know the close device; and when I call,
Look ye obey the masters of the craft.
I will not save myself and leave behind
My comrades in the cave: I might escape,
Having got clear from that obscure recess,
But 'twere unjust to leave in jeopardy
The dear companions who sailed here with me.

Chorus Come! who is first, that with his hand
Will urge down the burning brand
Through the lids, and quench and pierce
The Cyclops' eye so fiery fierce?

Song within.

Semi-chorus 1 Listen! listen! he is coming,
A most hideous discord humming.
Drunken, museless, awkward, yelling,
Far along his rocky dwelling;
Let us with some comic spell
Teach the yet unteachable.
By all means he must be blinded,
If my council be but minded.

Semicho. 2 Happy those made odorous
With the dew which sweet grapes weep,
To the village hastening thus,
Seek the vines that soothe to sleep,
Having first embraced thy friend,
There in luxury without end,
With the strings of yellow hair,
Of thy voluptuous leman fair,
Shalt sit playing on a bed!...
Speak, what door is openèd?

Cyclops Ha! ha! ha! I'm full of wine,
Heavy with the joy divine,
With the young feast oversated;
Like a merchant's vessel freighted

To the water's edge, my crop
Is laden to the gullet's top.
The fresh meadow grass of spring
Tempts me forth thus wandering
To my brothers on the mountains,
Who shall share the wine's sweet fountains.
Bring the cask, O stranger, bring!

Chorus One with eyes the fairest
Cometh from his dwelling;
Some one loves thee, rarest,
Bright beyond my telling.
In thy grace thou shinest
Like some nymph divinest,
In her caverns dewy:
All delights pursue thee,
Soon pied flowers, sweet-breathing,
Shall thy head be wreathing.

Ulysses Listen, O Cyclops, for I am well skilled
In Bacchus, whom I gave thee of to drink.
Cyclops What sort of God is Bacchus then accounted?
Ulysses The greatest among men for joy of life.
Cyclops I gulped him down with very great delight.
Ulysses This is a God who never injures men.
Cyclops How does the God like living in a skin?
Ulysses He is content wherever he is put.
Cyclops Gods should not have their body in a skin.
Ulysses If he gives joy, what is his skin to you?
Cyclops I hate the skin, but love the wine within.

Ulysses Stay here, now drink, and make your spirit glad.
Cyclops Should I not share this liquor with my brothers?
Ulysses Keep it yourself, and be more honoured so.
Cyclops I were more useful, giving to my friends.
Ulysses But village mirth breeds contests, broils, & blows.
Cyclops When I am drunk none shall lay hands on me.
Ulysses A drunken man is better within doors.
Cyclops He is a fool, who, drinking, loves not mirth.
Ulysses But he is wise, who drunk remains at home.
Cyclops What shall I do, Silenus? Shall I stay?
Silenus Stay ... for what need have you of pot companions?
Cyclops Indeed this place is closely carpeted
With flowers and grass.
Silenus And in the sun-warm noon
'Tis sweet to drink. Lie down beside me now,
Placing your mighty sides upon the ground.
Cyclops What do you put the cup behind me for?
Silenus That no one here may touch it.
Cyclops Thievish one!
You want to drink. Here place it in the midst.
And thou, O stranger, tell how art thou called?
Ulysses My name is Nobody. What favour now
Shall I receive to praise you at your hands?
Cyclops I'll feast on you the last of your companions.
Ulysses You grant your guest a fair reward, O Cyclops.
Cyclops Ha! what is this? Stealing the wine, you rogue!
Silenus It was this stranger kissing me because
I looked so beautiful.
Cyclops You shall repent
For kissing the coy wine that loves you not.

Silenus By Jupiter! you said that I am fair.
Cyclops Pour out, and only give me the cup full.
Silenus How is it mixed? let me observe.
Cyclops Curse you!
Give it me so.
Silenus Not till I see you wear
That coronal, and taste the cup to you.
Cyclops Thou wily traitor!
Silenus But the wine is sweet.
Cyclops Ay, you will roar if you are caught in drinking.
See now, my lip is clean and all my beard.
Silenus Now put your elbow right and drink again.
As you see me drink....
Cyclops How now?
Silenus Ye Gods, what a delicious gulp!
Cyclops Guest, take it; you pour out the wine for me.
Ulysses The wine is well accustomed to my hand.
Cyclops Pour out the wine!
Ulysses I pour; only be silent.
Cyclops Silence is a hard task to him who drinks.
Ulysses Take it and drink it off; leave not a dreg.
Oh, that the drinker died with his own draught!
Cyclops Papai! the vine must be a sapient plant.
Ulysses If you drink much after a mighty feast,
Moistening your thirsty maw, you will sleep well;
If you leave aught, Bacchus will dry you up.
Cyclops Ho! ho! I can scarce rise. What pure delight!
The heavens and earth appear to whirl about
Confusedly. I see the throne of Jove
And the clear congregation of the Gods.

Now if the Graces tempted me to kiss
I would not, for the loveliest of them all
I would not leave this Ganymede.

Silenus Polypheme,
I am the Ganymede of Jupiter.

Cyclops By Jove you are; I bore you off from Dardanus.

. . . . . .

Ulysses and the Chorus.

Ulysses Come, boys of Bacchus, children of high race,
This man within is folded up in sleep,
And soon will vomit flesh from his fell maw;
The brand under the shed thrusts out its smoke;
No preparation needs, but to burn out
The monster's eye;... but bear yourselves like men.

Chorus We will have courage like the adamant rock.
All things are ready for you here; go in
Before our father shall perceive the noise.

Ulysses Vulcan, Ætnean king! burn out with fire
The shining eye of this thy neighbouring monster!
And thou, O sleep, nursling of gloomy night,
Descend unmixed on this God-hated beast,
And suffer not Ulysses and his comrades,
Returning from their famous Trojan toils,
To perish by this man, who cares not either
For God or mortal; or I needs must think
That Chance is a supreme divinity,
And things divine are subject to her power.

Chorus Soon a crab the throat will seize
Of him who feeds upon his guest;
Fire will burn his lamp-like eyes

In revenge of such a feast!
A great oak stump now is lying
In the ashes yet undying.
Come, Maron, come!
Raging let him fix the doom,
Let him tear the eyelid up
Of the Cyclops ... that his cup
May be evil!
Oh, I long to dance and revel
With sweet Bromian, long desired,
In loved ivy wreaths attired;
Leaving this abandoned home...
Will the moment ever come?

Ulysses Be silent, ye wild things! Nay, hold your peace,
And keep your lips quite close; dare not to breathe,
Or spit, or e'en wink, lest ye wake the monster, ...
Until his eye be tortured out with fire.

Chorus Nay, we are silent, and we chaw the air.

Ulysses Come now, and lend a hand to the great stake
Within ... it is delightfully red hot.

Chorus You then command who first should seize the stake
To burn the Cyclops' eye, that all may share
In the great enterprise.

Semicho. 1 We are too far;
We cannot at this distance from the door
Thrust fire into his eye.

Semicho. 2 And we just now
Have become lame; cannot move hand or foot.

Chorus The same thing has occurred to us; our ankles

Are sprained with standing here, I know not how.

Ulysses What, sprained with standing still?

Chorus And there is dust
Or ashes in our eyes, I know not whence.

Ulysses Cowardly dogs! ye will not aid me then?

Chorus With pitying my own back and my backbone,
And with not wishing all my teeth knocked out,
This cowardice comes of itself. But stay,
I know a famous Orphic incantation
To make the brand stick of its own accord
Into the skull of this one-eyed son of Earth.

Ulysses Of old I knew ye thus by nature; now
I know ye better. I will use the aid
Of my own comrades. Yet though weak of hand
Speak cheerfully, that so ye may awaken
The courage of my friends with your blithe words.

Chorus This I will do with peril of my life,
And blind you with my exhortations, Cyclops.

Hasten and thrust,
And parch up to dust,
The eye of the beast,
Who feeds on his guest!
Burn and blind
The Ætnean hind!
Scoop and draw,
But beware lest he claw
Your limbs near his maw.

Cyclops Ah me! my eyesight is parched up to cinders.

Chorus What a sweet pæan! sing me that again!

Cyclops Ah me! indeed, what woe has fallen upon me!
But wretched nothings, think ye not to flee
Out of this rock; I, standing at the outlet,
Will bar the way and catch you as you pass.
Chorus What are you roaring out, Cyclops?
Cyclops I perish!
Chorus For you are wicked.
Cyclops And besides miserable.
Chorus What, did you fall into the fire when drunk?
Cyclops 'Twas Nobody destroyed me.
Chorus Why then no one
Can be to blame.
Cyclops I say 'twas Nobody
Who blinded me.
Chorus Why then you are not blind.
Cyclops I wish you were as blind as I am.
Chorus Nay,
It cannot be that no one made you blind.
Cyclops You jeer me; where, I ask, is Nobody?
Chorus Nowhere, O Cyclops.
Cyclops It was that stranger ruined me. The wretch
First gave me wine and then burned out my eye,
For wine is strong and hard to struggle with.
Have they escaped, or are they yet within?
Chorus They stand under the darkness of the rock
And cling to it.
Cyclops At my right hand or left?
Chorus Close on your right.
Cyclops Where?
Chorus Near the rock itself.
You have them.

Cyclops Oh, misfortune on misfortune!
I've cracked my skull.
Chorus Now they escape you there.
Cyclops Not there, although you say so.
Chorus Not on that side,
Cyclops Where then?
Chorus They creep about you on your left.
Cyclops Ah! I am mocked! They jeer me in my ills.
Chorus Not there! he is a little there beyond you.
Cyclops Detested wretch! where are you?
Ulysses Far from you
I keep with care this body of Ulysses.
Cyclops What do you say? You proffer a new name.
Ulysses My father named me so; and I have taken
A full revenge for your unnatural feast;
I should have done ill to have burned down Troy
And not revenged the murder of my comrades.
Cyclops Ai! ai! the ancient oracle is accomplished;
It said that I should have my eyesight blinded
By you coming from Troy, yet it foretold
That you should pay the penalty for this
By wandering long over the homeless sea.
Ulysses I bid thee weep ... consider what I say;
I go towards the shore to drive my ship
To mine own land, o'er the Sicilian wave.
Cyclops Not so, if, whelming you with this huge stone,
I can crush you and all your men together.
I will descend upon the shore, though blind,
Groping my way adown the steep ravine.
Chorus And we, the shipmates of Ulysses now,
Will serve our Bacchus all our happy lives.

EPIGRAMS FROM THE GREEK.

SPIRIT OF PLATO.



AGLE! why soarest
thou above that tomb?
To what sublime and
star-y-paven home
Floatest thou?
I am the image of swift
Plato's spirit,
Ascending heaven;
Athens doth inherit
His corpse below.

CIRCUMSTANCE.



MAN who was about to hang
himself,
Finding a purse, then threw away
his rope;
The owner, coming to reclaim his
pelf,
The halter found, and used it. So is Hope
Changed for Despair; one laid upon the shelf,
We take the other. Under heaven's high cope
Fortune is God; all you endure and do
Depends on circumstance as much as you.

TO STELLA.

From Plato.



HOU wert the morning star among the living,
Ere thy fair light had fled;
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New splendour to the dead.

KISSING HELENA.

From Plato.



ISSING Helena, together
With my kiss, my soul beside it
Came to my lips, and there I kept it, ...
For the poor thing had wandered thither,
To follow where the kiss should guide it;
Oh, cruel I, to intercept it!

FROM MOSCHUS.

Τὰν ἅλα τὰν γλαυκὰν ὅταν ὤνεμος ἀτρέμα βάλλῃ, κ.τ.λ.



HEN winds that move not its calm surface sweep
The azure sea, I love the land no more;
The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep
Tempt my unquiet mind. But when the roar

From Moschus

Of ocean's grey abyss resounds, and foam
Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst,
I turn from the drear aspect to the home
Of earth and its deep woods, where, interspersed,
When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody.
Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea,
Whose prey the wandering fish, an evil lot
Has chosen. But I my languid limbs will fling
Beneath the plane, where the brook's murmuring
Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not.

PAN, ECHO, AND THE SATYR.

PAN loved his neighbour Echo, but that child
Of Earth and Air pined for the Satyr leaping;
The Satyr loved with wasting madness wild
The bright nymph Lyda; and so three went weeping.
As Pan loved Echo, Echo loved the Satyr.
The Satyr, Lyda; and so love consumed them.
And thus to each ... which was a woful matter ...
To bear what they inflicted Justice doomed them;
For, in as much as each might hate the lover,
Each, loving, so was hated. ... Ye that love not
Be warned ... in thought turn this example over,
That when ye love, the like return ye prove not.

FRAGMENT OF THE ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF BION.

 E Dorian woods & waves lament aloud, ...
Augment your tide, O streams, with fruitless tears,
For the belovèd Bion is no more.
Let every tender herb and plant and flower,
From each dejected bud and drooping bloom,
Shed dews of liquid sorrow, and with breath
Of melancholy sweetness on the wind
Diffuse its languid love; let roses blush,
Anemones grow paler for the loss
Their dells have known; and thou, O hyacinth,
Utter thy legend now ... yet more, dumb flower,
Than "ah! alas!" ... thine is no common grief ...
Bion the is no more.

FROM BION.

Fragment of the Elegy on the Death of Adonis.

 MOURN Adonis dead ...
loveliest Adonis ...
Dead, dead Adonis ... and the Loves lament.
Sleep no more, Venus, wrapt in purple woof.
Wake, violet-stolèd queen, and weave the crown
Of Death ... 'tis Misery calls ... for he is dead!

From Bion

The lovely one lies wounded in the mountains,
His white thigh struck with the white tooth; he scarce
Yet breathes; and Venus hangs in agony there.
The dark blood wanders o'er his snowy limbs,
His eyes beneath their lids are lustreless,
The rose has fled from his wan lips, and there
That kiss is dead, which Venus gathers yet.

A deep, deep wound Adonis....
A deeper Venus bears upon her heart.
See, his belovèd dogs are gathering round...
The Oread nymphs are weeping. Aphrodite
With hair unbound is wandering thro' the woods,
Wildered, ungirt, unsandalled...the thorns pierce
Her hastening feet and drink her sacred blood.
Bitterly screaming out she is driven on
Thro' the long vales; and her Assyrian boy,
Her love, her husband calls. The purple blood
From his struck thigh stains her white navel now,
Her bosom, and her neck before like snow.

Alas for Cytherea! the Loves mourn...
The lovely, the beloved is gone!... And now
Her sacred beauty vanishes away.
For Venus whilst Adonis lived was fair...
Alas! her loveliness is dead with him.
The oaks and mountains cry, Ai! ai! Adonis!
The springs their waters change to tears and weep...
The flowers are withered up with grief....

Ai! ai! Adonis is dead
Echo resounds Adonis dead.
Who will weep not thy dreadful woe, O Venus?
Soon as she saw and knew the mortal wound
Of her Adonis ... saw the life blood flow
From his fair thigh, now wasting, wailing loud
She clasped him, and cried "Stay, Adonis!
Stay, dearest one, ...
and mix my lips with thine!
Wake yet a while Adonis ... oh, but once!
That I may kiss thee now for the last time ...
But for as long as one short kiss may live!
Oh, let thy breath flow from thy dying soul
Even to my mouth and heart, that I may suck
That

FROM VIRGIL.

The Tenth Eclogue (v. 1-26).



ELODIOUS Arethusa, o'er my verse
Shed thou once more the spirit of thy stream.
Who denies verse to Gallus?
So, when thou
Glidest beneath the green and purple gleam
Of Syracusan waters, mayst thou flow
Unmingled with the bitter Doric dew!
Begin, and, whilst the goats are browsing now
The soft leaves, in our way let us pursue
The melancholy loves of Gallus. List!

From Virgil

We sing not to the dead; the wild woods knew
His sufferings, and their echoes....
Young Naiads,... in what far woodlands wild
Wandered ye when unworthy love possessed
Your Gallus? Not where Pindus is up-piled,
Nor where Parnassus' sacred mount, nor where
Aonian Aganippe expands
The laurels and the myrtle-copses dim.
The pine-encircled mountain, Mænalus,
The cold crags of Lycæus, weep for him;
And Sylvan, crowned with rustic coronals,
Came shaking in his speed the budding wands
And heavy lilies which he bore: we knew
Pan the Arcadian.

. . . . . .

What madness is this, Gallus? Thy heart's care
With willing steps pursues another there.

FROM DANTE.

Adapted from a Sonnet in the Vita Nuova.

WHAT Mary is when she a little smiles
I cannot even tell or call to mind,
It is a miracle so new, so rare.

SONNET.

Dante Alighieri to Guido Cavalcanti.



UIDO, I would that Lappo, thou, and I,
Led by some strong enchantment, might ascend
A magic ship, whose charmèd sails should fly
With winds at will where'er our thoughts might wend,
And that no change, nor any evil chance
Should mar our joyous voyage; but it might be
That even satiety should still enhance
Between our hearts their strict community;
And that the bounteous wizard then would place
Vanna and Bice and my gentle love,
Companions of our wandering, and would grace
With passionate talk wherever we might rove
Our time, and each were as content and free
As I believe that thou and I should be.

THE FIRST CANZONE OF THE CONVITO.



E who intelligent the Third Heaven move,
Hear the discourse which is within my heart,
Which cannot be declared, it seems so new.

The First Canzone of the Convito

The Heaven whose course follows your power & art
O gentle creatures that ye are! me drew,
And therefore may I dare to speak to you,
Even of the life which now I live, ... and yet
I pray that ye will hear me when I cry,
And tell of mine own heart this novelty;
How the lamenting spirit moans in it,
And how a voice there murmurs against her
Who came on the refulgence of your sphere.

A sweet thought, which was once the life within
This heavy heart, many a time and oft
Went up before our Father's feet, and there
It saw a glorious Lady throned aloft;
And its sweet talk of her my soul did win,
So that I said, "Thither I too will fare."
That thought is fled, and one doth now appear
Which tyrannizes me with such fierce stress
That my heart trembles ... ye may see it leap ...
And on another Lady bids me keep
Mine eyes, and says: "Who would have blessedness
Let him but look upon that lady's eyes;
Let him not fear the agony of sighs."

This lowly thought, which once would talk with me...
Of a bright seraph sitting crowned on high,
Found such a cruel foe it died; and so
My Spirit wept, the grief is hot even now ...
And said, "Alas for me! how swift could flee
That piteous thought which did my life console!"

And the afflicted one questioning
Mine eyes, if such a lady saw they never,
And why they would....
I said: "Beneath those eyes might stand for ever
He whom regards must kill with....
To have known their power stood me in little stead;
Those eyes have looked on me, and I am dead."

"Thou art not dead, but thou hast wanderèd,
Thou Soul of ours, who thyself dost fret,"
A Spirit of gentle love beside me said:
"For that fair lady, whom thou dost regret,
Hath so transformed the life which thou hast led,
Thou scornest it, so worthless art thou made.
And see how meek, how pitiful, how staid,
Yet courteous, in her majesty she is.
And still call thou her 'Woman' in thy thought;
Her whom, if thou thyself deceivest not,
Thou wilt behold decked with such loveliness,
That thou wilt cry: 'Love only Lord, lo here
Thy handmaiden, do what thou wilt with her.'"

My song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain.
Whence, if by misadventure chance should bring
Thee to base company, as chance may do,
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I prithee comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight; tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

MATILDA GATHERING FLOWERS.

Purgatorio xxviii. 1-51.



ND earnest to explore within... around...
That divine wood whose thick green living woof
Tempered the young day to the sight, I wound

Up the green slope, beneath the forest's roof,
With slow soft steps leaving the mountain's steep;
And sought those inmost labyrinths, motion-proof

Against the air, that, in that stillness deep
And solemn, struck upon my forehead bare
The slow, soft stroke of a continuous....

In which the leaves tremblingly were
All bent towards that part where earliest
The sacred hill obscures the morning air.

Yet were they not so shaken from the rest,
But that the birds, perched on the utmost spray,
Incessantly renewing their blithe quest,

With perfect joy received the early day,
Singing within the glancing leaves, whose sound
Kept a low burden to their roundelay,

Such as from bough to bough gathers around
The pine forest on bleak Chiassi's shore,
When Æolus Scirocco has unbound.

Matilda gathering Flowers

My slow steps had already borne me o'er
Such space within the antique wood that I
Perceived not where I entered any more,

When, lo! a stream whose little waves went by,
Bending towards the left through grass that grew
Upon its bank, impeded suddenly

My going on. Water of purest hue
On earth would appear turbid and impure
Compared with this, whose unconcealing dew,

Dark, dark, yet clear, moved under the obscure
Eternal shades, whose interwoven looms
The rays of moon or sunlight ne'er endure.

I moved not with my feet, but mid the glooms
Pierced with my charmèd eye, contemplating
The mighty multitude of fresh May blooms

That starred that night; when, even as a thing
That suddenly, for blank astonishment,
Charms every sense, and makes all thought take wing, ...

A solitary woman! and she went

Matilda gathering Flowers

Singing, and gathering flower after flower,
With which her way was painted and besprent.

"Bright lady, who, if looks had ever power
To bear true witness of the heart within,
Dost bask under the beams of love, come lower

"Towards this bank. I prithee let me win
This much of thee, to come, that I may hear
Thy song: like Proserpine, in Enna's glen,

"Thou seemest to my fancy, singing here
And gathering flowers, as that fair maiden when
She lost the spring, and Ceres her, more dear."

SONNET.

Translated from the Italian of Cavalcanti. Guido Cavalcanti to Dante Alighieri.

RETURNING from its daily quest, my Spirit
Changed thoughts and vile in thee doth weep to find:
It grieves me that thy mild and gentle mind
Those ample virtues which it did inherit
Has lost. Once thou didst loathe the multitude
Of blind & maddening men; I then loved thee...
I loved thy lofty songs and that sweet mood
When thou wert faithful to thyself and me.
I dare not now thro' thy degraded state

Own the delight thy strains inspire ... in vain
I seek what once thou wert ... we cannot meet
As we were wont. Again, and yet again,
Ponder my words: so the false Spirit shall fly
And leave to thee thy true integrity.

SCENES FROM THE MAGICO PRODIGIOSO.

Translated from the Spanish of Calderon.

Scene I. Enter Cyprian, dressed as a Student; Clarin and Moscon as poor Scholars, with books.

Cyprian

IN the sweet solitude of
this calm place,
This intricate wild
wilderness of trees
And flowers and under-
growth of odorous plants,
Leave me; the books
you brought out of the
house
To me are ever best society.
And while with glorious festival and song,
Antioch now celebrates the consecration
Of a proud temple to great Jupiter,
And bears his image in loud jubilee

To its new shrine, I would consume what still
Lives of the dying day in studious thought,
Far from the throng and turmoil. You, my friends,
Go, and enjoy the festival; it will
Be worth your pains. You may return for me
When the sun seeks its grave among the billows,
Which among dim grey clouds on the horizon,
Dance like white plumes upon a hearse; ... and here
I shall expect you.

Moscon
I cannot bring my mind,
Great as my haste to see the festival
Certainly is, to leave you, Sir, without
Just saying some three or four thousand words.
How is it possible that on a day
Of such festivity you can be content
To come forth to a solitary country
With three or four old books, and turn your back
On all this mirth?

Clarin
My master's in the right;
There is not anything more tiresome
Than a procession day, with troops, and priests,
And dances, and all that.

Moscon
From first to last,
Clarin, you are a temporizing flatterer;
You praise not what you feel but what he does.
Toad-eater!

Clarin
You lie ... under a mistake ...
For this is the most civil sort of lie
That can be given to a man's face. I now
Say what I think.

Cyprian Enough, you foolish fellows!
Puffed up with your own doting ignorance,
You always take the two sides of one question.
Now go; and as I said, return for me
When night falls, veiling in its shadows wide
This glorious fabric of the universe.
Moscon How happens it, although you can maintain
The folly of enjoying festivals,
That yet you go there?
Clarin Nay, the consequence
Is clear. Who ever did what he advises
Others to do?...
Moscon Would that my feet were wings,
So would I fly to Livia. Exit.
Clarin To speak truth,
Livia is she who has surprised my heart;
But he is more than half way there.... Soho!
Livia, I come; good sport, Livia, Soho! Exit.
Cyprian Now, since I am alone, let me examine
The question which has long disturbed my mind
With doubt, since first I read in Plinius
The words of mystic import and deep sense
In which he defines God. My intellect
Can find no God with whom these marks & signs
Fitly agree. It is a hidden truth
Which I must fathom.
Cyprian reads; the Demon, dressed in a Court dress, enters.
Demon Search even as thou wilt,
But thou shalt never find what I can hide.

Cyprian What noise is that among the boughs? Who moves?
What art thou?...

Demon 'Tis a foreign gentleman.
Even from this morning I have lost my way
In this wild place; and my poor horse at last,
Quite overcome, has stretched himself upon
The enamelled tapestry of this mossy mountain,
And feeds and rests at the same time. I was
Upon my way to Antioch upon business
Of some importance, but wrapped up in cares
(Who is exempt from this inheritance?)
I parted from my company, and lost
My way, and lost my servants and my comrades.

Cyprian 'Tis singular that even within the sight
Of the high towers of Antioch you could lose
Your way. Of all the avenues and green paths
Of this wild wood there is not one but leads,
As to its centre, to the walls of Antioch;
Take which you will you cannot miss your road.

Demon And such is ignorance! Even in the sight
Of knowledge, it can draw no profit from it.
But as it still is early, and as I
Have no acquaintances in Antioch,
Being a stranger there, I will even wait
The few surviving hours of the day,
Until the night shall conquer it. I see,
Both by your dress and by the books in which
You find delight and company, that you
Are a great student; for my part, I feel
Much sympathy with such pursuits.

Cyprian Have you
Studied much?
Demon No, ... and yet I know enough
Not to be wholly ignorant.
Cyprian Pray, Sir,
What science may you know?
Demon Many.
Cyprian Alas!
Much pains must we expend on one alone,
And even then attain it not; but you
Have the presumption to assert that you
Know many without study.
Demon And with truth.
For in the country whence I come the sciences
Require no learning, ... they are known.
Cyprian Oh, would
I were of that bright country! for in this
The more we study, we the more discover
Our ignorance.
Demon It is so true, that I
Had so much arrogance as to oppose
The chair of the most high Professorship,
And obtained many votes, and, though I lost,
The attempt was still more glorious than the failure
Could be dishonourable. If you believe not,
Let us refer it to dispute respecting
That which you know the best, and although I
Know not the opinion you maintain, and though
It be the true one, I will take the contrary.

Cyprian The offer gives me pleasure. I am now
Debating with myself upon a passage
Of Plinius, and my mind is racked with doubt
To understand and know who is the God
Of whom he speaks.

Demon It is a passage, if
I recollect it right, couched in these words:
"God is one supreme goodness, one pure essence,
One substance, and one sense, all sight, all hands."

Cyprian 'Tis true.

Demon What difficulty find you here?

Cyprian I do not recognize among the Gods
The God defined by Plinius; if he must
Be supreme goodness, even Jupiter
Is not supremely good; because we see
His deeds are evil, and his attributes
Tainted with mortal weakness. In what manner
Can supreme goodness be consistent with
The passions of humanity?

Demon The wisdom
Of the old world masked with the names of Gods
The attributes of Nature and of Man;
A sort of popular philosophy.

Cyprian This reply will not satisfy me, for
Such awe is due to the high name of God
That ill should never be imputed. Then,
Examining the question with more care,
It follows that the Gods would always will
That which is best, were they supremely good.
How then does one will one thing, one another?

And that you may not say that I allege
Poetical or philosophic learning,
Consider the ambiguous responses
Of their oracular statues; from two shrines
Two armies shall obtain the assurance of
One victory. Is it not indisputable
That two contending wills can never lead
To the same end? And, being opposite,
If one be good is not the other evil?
Evil in God is inconceivable;
But supreme goodness fails among the Gods
Without their union.

Demon I deny your major.
These responses are means towards some end
Unfathomed by our intellectual beam.
They are the work of providence, and more
The battle's loss may profit those who lose
Than victory advantage those who win.

Cyprian That I admit; and yet that God should not
(Falsehood is incompatible with deity)
Assure the victory; it would be enough
To have permitted the defeat. If God
Be all sight, ... God, who had beheld the truth,
Would not have given assurance of an end
Never to be accomplished: thus, although
The Deity may according to his attributes
Be well distinguished into persons, yet
Even in the minutest circumstance
His essence must be one.

Demon To attain the end

The affections of the actors in the scene
Must have been thus influenced by his voice.

Cyprian But for a purpose thus subordinate
He might have employed Genii, good or evil,...
A sort of spirits called so by the learned,
Who roam about inspiring good or evil,
And from whose influence and existence we
May well infer our immortality.
Thus God might easily, without descent
To a gross falsehood in his proper person,
Have moved the affections by this mediation
To the just point.

Demon These trifling contradictions
Do not suffice to impugn the unity
Of the high Gods; in things of great importance
They still appear unanimous; consider
That glorious fabric, man,... his workmanship
Is stamped with one conception.

Cyprian Who made man
Must have, methinks, the advantage of the others.
If they are equal, might they not have risen
In opposition to the work, and being
All hands, according to our author here,
Have still destroyed even as the other made?
If equal in their power, unequal only
In opportunity, which of the two
Will remain conqueror?

Demon On impossible
And false hypothesis there can be built
No argument. Say, what do you infer

From this?

Cyprian That there must be a mighty God
Of supreme goodness and of highest grace,
All sight, all hands, all truth, infallible,
Without an equal and without a rival,
The cause of all things and the effect of nothing,
One power, one will, one substance, & one essence.
And in whatever persons, one or two,
His attributes may be distinguished, one
Sovereign power, one solitary essence,
One cause of all cause.
They rise.

Demon How can I impugn
So clear a consequence?

Cyprian Do you regret
My victory?

Demon Who but regrets a check
In rivalry of wit? I could reply
And urge new difficulties, but will now
Depart, for I hear steps of men approaching,
And it is time that I should now pursue
My journey to the city.

Cyprian Go in peace!

Demon Remain in peace! ... Since thus it profits him
To study, I will wrap his senses up
In sweet oblivion of all thought but of
A piece of excellent beauty; and, as I
Have power given me to wage enmity
Against Justina's soul, I will extract
From one effect two vengeances. Aside and exit.

Cyprian I never
Met a more learnèd person. Let me now
Revolve this doubt again with careful mind.
He reads.

Floro and Lelio enter.

Lelio Here stop. These toppling rocks and tangled boughs,
Impenetrable by the noonday beam,
Shall be sole witnesses of what we...

Floro Draw!
If there were words, here is the place for deeds.

Lelio Thou needest not instruct me; well I know
That in the field the silent tongue of steel
Speaks thus,... They fight.

Cyprian Ha! what is this? Lelio,... Floro,...
Be it enough that Cyprian stands between you,
Although unarmed.

Lelio Whence comest thou to stand
Between me and my vengeance?

Floro From what rocks
And desert cells?

Enter Moscon and Clarin.

Moscon Run! run! for where we left
My master, I now hear the clash of swords.

Clarin I never run to approach things of this sort,
But only to avoid them. Sir! Cyprian! sir!

Cyprian Be silent, fellows! What! two friends who are
In blood and fame the eyes and hope of Antioch,
One of the noble race of the Colalti,
The other son o' the Governor, adventure

And cast away, on some slight cause no doubt,
Two lives, the honour of their country?

Lelio Cyprian!
Although my high respect towards your person
Holds now my sword suspended, thou canst not
Restore it to the slumber of the scabbard:
Thou knowest more of science than the duel;
For when two men of honour take the field,
No counsel nor respect can make them friends,
But one must die in the dispute.

Floro I pray
That you depart hence with your people, and
Leave us to finish what we have begun
Without advantage.

Cyprian Though you may imagine
That I know little of the laws of duel,
Which vanity and valour instituted,
You are in error. By my birth I am
Held no less than yourselves to know the limits
Of honour and of infamy, nor has study
Quenched the free spirit which first ordered them;
And thus to me, as one well experienced
In the false quicksands of the sea of honour,
You may refer the merits of the case;
And if I should perceive in your relation
That either has the right to satisfaction
From the other, I give you my word of honour
To leave you.

Lelio Under this condition then
I will relate the cause, and you will cede

And must confess the impossibility
Of compromise; for the same lady is
Beloved by Floro and myself.

Floro — It seems
Much to me that the light of day should look
Upon that idol of my heart... but he...
Leave us to fight, according to thy word.

Cyprian — Permit one question further: is the lady
Impossible to hope or not?

Lelio — She is
So excellent that if the light of day
Should excite Floro's jealousy, it were
Without just cause, for even the light of day
Trembles to gaze on her.

Cyprian — Would you for your
Part, marry her?

Floro — Such is my confidence.

Cyprian — And you?

Lelio — Oh! would that I could lift my hope
So high, for though she is extremely poor,
Her virtue is her dowry.

Cyprian — And if you both
Would marry her, is it not weak and vain,
Culpable and unworthy, thus beforehand
To slur her honour? What would the world say
If one should slay the other, and if she
Should afterwards espouse the murderer?

The rivals agree to refer their quarrel to Cyprian; who in consequence visits Justina, and becomes enamoured of her: she disdains him, and he retires to a solitary seashore.

Scene II.

Cyprian  MEMORY! permit it not
That the tyrant of my thought
Be another soul that still
Holds dominion o'er the will
That would refuse, but can no more,
To bend, to tremble, and adore.
Vain idolatry!... I saw,
And gazing, became blind with error;
Weak ambition, which the awe
Of her presence bound to terror!
So beautiful she was... and I,
Between my love and jealousy,
Am so convulsed with hope and fear,
Unworthy as it may appear.
So bitter is the life I live,
That, hear me, Hell! I now would give
To thy most detested spirit
My soul, for ever to inherit,
To suffer punishment and pine,
So this woman may be mine.
Hear'st thou, Hell! dost thou reject it?
My soul is offered!

Demon (unseen) I accept it.

Tempest, with thunder and lightning.

Cyprian What is this? ye heavens for ever pure,
At once intensely radiant and obscure!
Athwart the æthereal halls
The lightning's arrow and the thunder-balls
The day affright,

As from the horizon round
Burst with earthquake sound
In mighty torrents the electric fountains;
Clouds quench the sun, and thunder smoke
Strangles the air, and fire eclipses heaven.
Philosophy, thou canst not even
Compel their causes underneath thy yoke;
From yonder clouds even to the waves below
The fragments of a single ruin choke
Imagination's flight;
For, on flakes of surge, like feathers light,
The ashes of the desolation, cast
Upon the gloomy blast,
Tell of the footsteps of the storm;
And nearer, see, the melancholy form
Of a great ship, the outcast of the sea,
Drives miserably!
And it must fly the pity of the port,
Or perish, and its last and sole resort
Is its own raging enemy.
The terror of the thrilling cry
Was a fatal prophecy
Of coming death, who hovers now
Upon that shattered prow,
That they who die not may be dying still.
And not alone the insane elements
Are populous with wild portents,
But that sad ship is as a miracle
Of sudden ruin, for it drives so fast
It seems as if it had arrayed its form

With the headlong storm.
It strikes... I almost feel the shock...
It stumbles on a jagged rock,...
Sparkles of blood on the white foam are cast.
A Tempest.

All exclaim, within
We are all lost!

Demon, within — Now from this plank will I
Pass to the land and thus fulfil my scheme.

Cyprian — As in contempt of the elemental rage
A man comes forth in safety, while the ship's
Great form is in a watery eclipse
Obliterated from the Ocean's page,
And round its wreck the huge sea-monsters sit,
A horrid conclave, and the whistling wave
Is heaped over its carcass, like a grave.

The Demon enters, as escaped from the sea.

Demon, aside — It was essential to my purposes
To wake a tumult on the sapphire ocean,
That in this unknown form I might at length
Wipe out the blot of the discomfiture
Sustained upon the mountain, and assail
With a new war the soul of Cyprian,
Forging the instruments of his destruction
Even from his love and from his wisdom.... Oh!
Belovèd earth, dear mother, in thy bosom
I seek a refuge from the monster who
Precipitates itself upon me.

Cyprian — Friend,
Collect thyself; and be the memory

Of thy late suffering, and thy greatest sorrow
But as a shadow of the past, ... for nothing
Beneath the circle of the moon, but flows
And changes, and can never know repose.

Demon And who art thou, before whose feet my fate
Has prostrated me?

Cyprian One who, moved with pity,
Would soothe its stings.

Demon Oh! that can never be!
No solace can my lasting sorrows find.

Cyprian Wherefore?

Demon Because my happiness is lost.
Yet I lament what has long ceased to be
The object of desire or memory,
And my life is not life.

Cyprian Now, since the fury
Of this earthquaking hurricane is still,
And the crystàlline heaven has reassumed
Its windless calm so quickly, that it seems
As if its heavy wrath had been awakened
Only to overwhelm that vessel, ... speak,
Who art thou, and whence comest thou?

Demon Far more
My coming hither cost than thou hast seen
Or I can tell. Among my misadventures
This shipwreck is the least. Wilt thou hear?

Cyprian Speak.

Demon Since thou desirest, I will then unveil
Myself to thee; for in myself I am
A world of happiness and misery;

This I have lost, and that I must lament
For ever. In my attributes I stood
So high and so heroically great,
In lineage so supreme, and with a genius
Which penetrated with a glance the world
Beneath my feet, that, won by my high merit,
A king ... whom I may call the king of kings,
Because all others tremble in their pride
Before the terrors of his countenance,
In his high palace roofed with brightest gems
Of living light ... call them the stars of Heaven ...
Named me his counsellor. But the high praise
Stung me with pride and envy, and I rose
In mighty competition to ascend
His seat, and place my foot triumphantly
Upon his subject thrones. Chastised, I know
The depth to which ambition falls; too mad
Was the attempt, and yet more mad were now
Repentance of the irrevocable deed.
Therefore I chose this ruin, with the glory
Of not to be subdued, before the shame
Of reconciling me with him who reigns
By coward cession. Nor was I alone,
Nor am I now, nor shall I be alone;
And there was hope, and there may still be hope,
For many suffrages among his vassals
Hailed me their lord and king, and many still
Are mine, and many more perchance shall be.
Thus vanquished, though in fact victorious,
I left his seat of empire, from mine eye

Shooting forth poisonous lightning, while my words
With inauspicious thunderings shook Heaven,
Proclaiming vengeance, public as my wrong,
And imprecating on his prostrate slaves
Rapine, and death, and outrage. Then I sailed
Over the mighty fabric of the world, ...
A pirate ambushed in its pathless sands,
A lynx crouched watchfully among its caves
And craggy shores; and I have wandered over
The expanse of these wide wildernesses
In this great ship, whose bulk is now dissolved
In the light breathings of the invisible wind,
And which the sea has made a dustless ruin,
Seeking ever a mountain, through whose forests
I seek a man, whom I must now compel
To keep his word with me. I came arrayed
In tempest, and, although my power could well
Bridle the forest winds in their career,
For other causes I forbore to soothe
Their fury to Favonian gentleness;
I could and would not; (thus I wake in him Aside.
A love of magic art). Let not this tempest,
Nor the succeeding calm excite thy wonder;
For by my art the sun would turn as pale
As his weak sister with unwonted fear;
And in my wisdom are the orbs of Heaven
Written as in a record; I have pierced
The flaming circles of their wondrous spheres
And know them as thou knowest every corner
Of this dim spot. Let it not seem to thee

That I boast vainly; wouldst thou that I work
A charm over this waste and savage wood,
This Babylon of crags and aged trees,
Filling its leafy coverts with a horror
Thrilling and strange? I am the friendless guest
Of these wild oaks and pines; and as from thee
I have received the hospitality
Of this rude place, I offer thee the fruit
Of years of toil in recompense; whate'er
Thy wildest dream presented to thy thought
As object of desire, that shall be thine.

. . . . . .

And thenceforth shall so firm an amity
'Twixt thee and me be, that neither Fortune,
The monstrous phantom which pursues success,
That careful miser, that free prodigal,
Who ever alternates with changeful hand
Evil and good, reproach and fame; nor Time,
That loadstar of the ages, to whose beam
The wingèd years speed o'er the intervals
Of their unequal revolutions; nor
Heaven itself, whose beautiful bright stars
Rule and adorn the world, can ever make
The least division between thee and me,
Since now I find a refuge in thy favour.

Scene III. The Demon tempts Justina, who is a Christian.

Demon



BYSS of Hell! I call on thee,
Thou wild misrule of thine own anarchy!
From thy prison-house set free
The spirits of voluptuous death
That with their mighty breath
They may destroy a world of virgin thoughts;
Let her chaste mind with fancies thick as motes
Be peopled from thy shadowy deep,
Till her guiltless fantasy
Full to overflowing be!
And with sweetest harmony,
Let birds, and flowers, and leaves, and all things move
To love, only to love.
Let nothing meet her eyes
But signs of Love's soft victories;
Let nothing meet her ear
But sounds of Love's sweet sorrow,
So that from faith no succour she may borrow,
But, guided by my spirit blind
And in a magic snare entwined,
She may now seek Cyprian.
Begin, while I in silence bind
My voice, when thy sweet song thou hast began.

A Voice, within

What is the glory far above
All else in human life?

All — Love! love!

While these words are sung, the Demon goes out at one door, and Justina enters at another.

1st Voice — There is no form in which the fire
Of love its traces has impressed not.
Man lives far more in love's desire
Than by life's breath, soon possessed not.
If all that lives must love or die,
All shapes on earth, or sea, or sky,
With one consent to Heaven cry
That the glory far above
All else in life is...

All — Love! O love!

Justina — Thou melancholy thought which art
So flattering and so sweet, to thee
When did I give the liberty
Thus to afflict my heart?
What is the cause of this new power
Which doth my fevered being move,
Momently raging more and more?
What subtle pain is kindled now
Which from my heart doth overflow
Into my senses?...

All — Love, O, love!

Justina — 'Tis that enamoured nightingale

Who gives me the reply;
He ever tells the same soft tale
Of passion and of constancy
To his mate, who, rapt and fond,
Listening sits, a bough beyond.

Be silent, Nightingale... no more
Make me think, in hearing thee
Thus tenderly thy love deplore,
If a bird can feel his so,
What a man would feel for me.
And, voluptuous vine, O thou
Who seekest most when least pursuing, ...
To the trunk thou interlacest
Art the verdure which embracest,
And the weight which is its ruin, ...
No more, with green embraces, vine,
Make me think on what thou lovest, ...
For whilst thus thy boughs entwine,
I fear lest thou shouldst teach me, sophist,
How arms might be entangled too.

Light-enchanted sunflower, thou
Who gazest ever true and tender
On the sun's revolving splendour!
Follow not his faithless glance
With thy faded countenance,
Nor teach my beating heart to fear,
If leaves can mourn without a tear,
How eyes must weep! O Nightingale,

Cease from thy enamoured tale, ...
Leafy vine, unwreathe thy bower,
Restless sunflower, cease to move, ...
Or tell me all, what poisonous power
Ye use against me ...

All Love! love! love!

Justina It cannot be! Whom have I ever loved?
Trophies of my oblivion and disdain,
Floro and Lelio did I not reject?
And Cyprian? ...
(She becomes troubled at the name of Cyprian)
Did I not requite him
With such severity, that he has fled
Where none has ever heard of him again? ...
Alas! I now begin to fear that this
May be the occasion whence desire grows bold,
As if there were no danger. From the moment
That I pronounced to my own listening heart,
Cyprian is absent, ... Oh, me miserable!
I know not what I feel! More calmly.
It must be pity
To think that such a man, whom all the world
Admired, should be forgot by all the world,
And I the cause. She again becomes troubled.
And yet if it were pity,
Floro and Lelio might have equal share,
For they are both imprisoned for my sake. Calmly.
Alas! what reasonings are these? it is

Enough I pity him, and that, in vain,
Without this ceremonious subtlety.
And woe is me! I know not where to find him now,
Even should I seek him through this wide world.

Enter Demon.

Demon Follow, and I will lead thee where he is.

Justina And who art thou who hast found entrance hither
Into my chamber through the doors and locks?
Art thou a monstrous shadow which my madness
Has formed in the idle air?

Demon No. I am one
Called by the thought which tyrannizes thee
From his eternal dwelling; who this day
Is pledged to bear thee unto Cyprian.

Justina So shall thy promise fail. This agony
Of passion which afflicts my heart and soul
May sweep imagination in its storm;
The will is firm.

Demon Already half is done
In the imagination of an act.
The sin incurred, the pleasure then remains;
Let not the will stop half-way on the road.

Justina I will not be discouraged, nor despair,
Although I thought it, and although 'tis true
That thought is but a prelude to the deed.
Thought is not in my power, but action is.
I will not move my foot to follow thee.

Demon But a far mightier wisdom than thine own
Exerts itself within thee, with such power
Compelling thee to that which it inclines

That it shall force thy step; how wilt thou then
Resist, Justina?

Justina By my free-will.

Demon I
Must force thy will.

Justina It is invincible;
It were not free if thou hadst power upon it.

He draws, but cannot move her.

Demon Come, where a pleasure waits thee.

Justina It were bought
Too dear.

Demon 'Twill soothe thy heart to softest peace.

Justina 'Tis dread captivity.

Demon 'Tis joy, 'tis glory.

Justina 'Tis shame, 'tis torment, 'tis despair.

Demon But how
Canst thou defend thyself from that or me,
If my power drags thee onward?

Justina My defence
Consists in God.

He vainly endeavours to force her, and at last releases her.

Demon Woman, thou hast subdued me
Only by not owning thyself subdued.
But since thou thus findest defence in God,
I will assume a feignèd form, and thus
Make thee a victim of my baffled rage.
For I will mask a spirit in thy form
Who will betray thy name to infamy,
And doubly shall I triumph in thy loss,
First by dishonouring thee, and then by turning

False pleasure to true ignominy. Exit.

Justina I
Appeal to Heaven against thee; so that Heaven
May scatter thy delusions, and the blot
Upon my fame vanish in idle thought,
Even as flame dies in the envious air,
And as the floweret wanes at morning frost,
And thou shouldst never... But, alas! to whom
Do I still speak?... Did not a man but now
Stand here before me?... No, I am alone,
And yet I saw him. Is he gone so quickly?
Or can the heated mind engender shapes
From its own fear? Some terrible and strange
Peril is near. Lisander! father! lord!
Livia!...

Enter Lisander and Livia.

Lisander Oh, my daughter! What?
Livia What?
Justina Saw you
A man go forth from my apartment now?...
I scarce contain myself!
Lisander A man here!
Justina Have you not see him?
Livia No, Lady.
Justina I saw him.
Lisander 'Tis impossible; the doors
Which led to this apartment were all locked.
Livia, aside I daresay it was Moscon whom she saw,
For he was locked up in my room.
Lisander It must

Have been some image of thy fantasy.
Such melancholy as thou feedest is
Skilful in forming such in the vain air
Out of the motes and atoms of the day.

Livia My master's in the right.

Justina Oh, would it were
Delusion; but I fear some greater ill.
I feel as if out of my bleeding bosom
My heart was torn in fragments; ay,
Some mortal spell is wrought against my frame;
So potent was the charm that, had not God
Shielded my humble innocence from wrong,
I should have sought my sorrow and my shame
With willing steps.... Livia, quick, bring my cloak,
For I must seek refuge from these extremes
Even in the temple of the highest God
Where secretly the faithful worship.

Livia Here.

Justina, putting on her cloak
In this, as in a shroud of snow, may I
Quench the consuming fire in which I burn,
Wasting away!

Lisander And I will go with thee.

Livia When I once see them safe out of the house
I shall breathe freely.

Justina So do I confide
In thy just favour, Heaven!

Lisander Let us go.

Justina Thine is the cause, great God! turn for my sake,
And for thine own, mercifully to me!

SCENES FROM THE FAUST OF GOETHE.

Scene I. Prologue in Heaven. The Lord and the Host of Heaven. Enter three Archangels.

Raphael

THE sun makes music as of old
Amid the rival spheres of Heaven,
On its predestined circle rolled
With thunder speed: the Angels even
Draw strength from gazing on its glance,
Though none its meaning fathom may;
The world's unwithered countenance
Is bright as at creation's day.

Gabriel. And swift and swift, with rapid lightness,
The adornèd Earth spins silently,
Alternating Elysian brightness
With deep and dreadful night; the sea
Foams in broad billows from the deep
Up to the rocks, and rocks and ocean,
Onward, with spheres which never sleep,
Are hurried in eternal motion.

Michael

And tempests in contention roar
From land to sea, from sea to land;
And, raging, weave a chain of power,
Which girds the earth, as with a band.
A flashing desolation there
Flames before the thunder's way;
But thy servants, Lord, revere
The gentle changes of thy day.

Chorus of the Three

The Angels draw strength from thy glance,
Though no one comprehend thee may;
Thy world's unwithered countenance
Is bright as on creation's day.

Enter Mephistopheles.

Mephistopheles

As thou, O Lord, once more art kind enough
To interest thyself in our affairs,
And ask, "How goes it with you there below?"
And as indulgently at other times
Thou tookest not my visits in ill part,
Thou seest me here once more among thy household.
Though I should scandalize this company,
You will excuse me if I do not talk
In the high style which they think fashionable;
My pathos certainly would make you laugh too,
Had you not long since given over laughing.
Nothing know I to say of suns and worlds;
I observe only how men plague themselves.
The little god o' the world keeps the same stamp,

As wonderful as on creation's day.
A little better would he live, hadst thou
Not given him a glimpse of Heaven's light,
Which he calls reason, and employs it only
To live more beastlily than any beast.
With reverence to your Lordship be it spoken,
He's like one of those long-legged grasshoppers,
Who flits and jumps about, and sings for ever
The same old song i' the grass. There let him lie,
Burying his nose in every heap of dung.

The Lord Have you no more to say? Do you come here
Always to scold, and cavil, and complain?
Seems nothing ever right to you on earth?

Meph. No, Lord! I find all there, as ever, bad at best.
Even I am sorry for man's days of sorrow;
I could myself almost give up the pleasure
Of plaguing the poor things.

The Lord Knowest thou Faust?

Meph. The Doctor?

The Lord Ay; my servant Faust.

Meph. In truth
He serves you in a fashion quite his own;
And the fool's meat and drink are not of earth.
His aspirations bear him on so far
That he is half aware of his own folly,
For he demands from Heaven its fairest star,
And from the earth the highest joy it bears,
Yet all things far, and all things near, are vain
To calm the deep emotions of his breast.

The Lord Though he now serves me in a cloud of error,

I will soon lead him forth to the clear day.
When trees look green, full well the gardener knows
That fruits and blooms will deck the coming year.

Meph. What will you bet? ... now I am sure of winning ...
Only, observe you give me full permission
To lead him softly on my path.

The Lord As long
As he shall live upon the earth, so long
Is nothing unto thee forbidden. Man
Must err till he has ceased to struggle.

Meph. Thanks.
And that is all I ask; for willingly
I never make acquaintance with the dead.
The full fresh cheeks of youth are food for me,
And if a corpse knocks, I am not at home.
For I am like a cat ... I like to play
A little with the mouse before I eat it.

The Lord Well, well! it is permitted thee. Draw thou
His spirit from its springs; as thou find'st power,
Seize him and lead him on thy downward path;
And stand ashamed when failure teaches thee
That a good man, even in his darkest longings,
Is well aware of the right way.

Meph. Well and good.
I am not in much doubt about my bet,
And if I lose, then 'tis your turn to crow;
Enjoy your triumph then with a full breast.
Ay; dust shall he devour, and that with pleasure,
Like my old paramour, the famous Snake.

The Lord Pray come here when it suits you; for I never

Had much dislike for people of your sort.
And, among all the Spirits who rebelled,
The knave was ever the least tedious to me.
The active spirit of man soon sleeps, and soon
He seeks unbroken quiet; therefore I
Have given him the Devil for a companion,
Who may provoke him to some sort of work,
And must create for ever. But ye, pure
Children of God, enjoy eternal beauty.
Let that which ever operates and lives
Clasp you within the limits of its love;
And seize with sweet and melancholy thoughts
The floating phantoms of its loveliness.

Heaven closes; the Archangels exeunt.

Meph. From time to time I visit the old fellow,
And I take care to keep on good terms with him.
Civil enough is this same God Almighty,
To talk so freely with the Devil himself.

Scene II. May-Day Night. The Hartz Mountain, a desolate country. Faust, Mephistopheles.

Meph.  OULD you not like a broomstick? As for me
I wish I had a good stout ram to ride;
For we are still far from the appointed place.

Faust This knotted staff is help enough for me,
Whilst I feel fresh upon my legs. What good
Is there in making short a pleasant way?

To creep along the labyrinths of the vales,
And climb those rocks, where ever-babbling springs
Precipitate themselves in waterfalls,
Is the true sport that seasons such a path.
Already Spring kindles the birchen spray,
And the hoar pines already feel her breath.
Shall she not work also within our limbs?

Meph. Nothing of such an influence do I feel.
My body is all wintry, and I wish
The flowers upon our path were frost and snow.
But see how melancholy rises now,
Dimly uplifting her belated beam,
The blank unwelcome round of the red moon,
And gives so bad a light that every step
One stumbles 'gainst some crag. With your permission,
I'll call an Ignis-Fatuus to our aid.
I see one yonder burning jollily.
Halloo, my friend! may I request that you
Would favour us with your bright company?
Why should you blaze away there to no purpose?
Pray be so good as light us up this way.

Ignis-Fatuus With reverence be it spoken, I will try
To overcome the lightness of my nature;
Our course, you know, is generally zigzag.

Meph. Ha, ha! your worship thinks you have to deal
With men. Go straight on, in the Devil's name,
Or I shall puff your flickering life out.

Ignis-Fatuus Well,
I see you are the master of the house;

I will accommodate myself to you.
Only consider that to-night this mountain
Is all enchanted, and if Jack-a-Lantern
Shows you his way, though you should miss your own,
You ought not to be too exact with him.

Faust, Mephistopheles, and Ignis-Fatuus, in alternate Chorus.

The limits of the sphere of dream,
The bounds of true and false, are past.
Lead us on, thou wandering Gleam,
Lead us onward, far and fast,
To the wide, the desert waste.

But see, how swift advance and shift
Trees behind trees, row by row;
How, clift by clift, rocks bend and lift
Their frowning foreheads as we go.
The giant-snouted crags, ho! ho!
How they snort, and how they blow!

Through the mossy sods and stones,
Stream and streamlet hurry down...
A rushing throng! A sound of song
Beneath the vault of Heaven is blown!
Sweet notes of love, the speaking tones
Of this bright day, sent down to say
That Paradise on Earth is known,
Resound around, beneath, above.

All we hope and all we love
Finds a voice in this blithe strain,
Which wakens hill and wood and rill,
And vibrates far o'er field and vale,
And which Echo, like the tale
Of old times, repeats again.

To-whoo! to-whoo! near, nearer now
The sound of song, the rushing throng!
Are the screech, the lapwing, and the jay,
All awake as if 'twere day?
See, with long legs and belly wide,
A salamander in the brake!
Every root is like a snake,
And along the loose hillside,
With strange contortions through the night,
Curls, to seize or to affright;
And, animated, strong, and many,
They dart forth polypus-antennæ,
To blister with their poison spume
The wanderer. Through the dazzling gloom
The many-coloured mice, that thread
The dewy turf beneath our tread,
In troops each other's motions cross,
Through the heath and through the moss;
And, in legions intertangled,
The fireflies flit, and swarm, and throng,
Till all the mountain depths are spangled.

Tell me, shall we go or stay?

Shall we onward? Come along!
Everything around is swept
Forward, onward, far away!
Trees and masses intercept
The sight, and wisps on every side
Are puffed up and multiplied.

Meph. Now vigorously seize my skirt, and gain
This pinnacle of isolated crag.
One may observe with wonder from this point,
How Mammon glows among the mountains.

Faust Ay...
And strangely through the solid depth below
A melancholy light, like the red dawn,
Shoots from the lowest gorge of the abyss
Of mountains, lightning hitherward: there rise
Pillars of smoke, here clouds float gently by;
Here the light burns soft as the enkindled air,
Or the illumined dust of golden flowers;
And now it glides like tender colours spreading;
And now bursts forth in fountains from the earth;
And now it winds, one torrent of broad light,
Through the far valley, with a hundred veins;
And now once more within that narrow corner
Masses itself into intensest splendour.
And near us, see, sparks spring out of the ground,
Like golden sand scattered upon the darkness;
The pinnacles of that black wall of mountains
That hems us in are kindled.

Meph. Rare, in faith!

Does not Sir Mammon gloriously illuminate
His palace for this festival... it is
A pleasure which you had not known before.
I spy the boisterous guests already.

Faust

How
The children of the wind rage in the air!
With what fierce strokes they fall upon my neck!

Meph.

Cling tightly to the old ribs of the crag.
Beware! for if with them thou warrest
In their fierce flight towards the wilderness,
Their breath will sweep thee into dust, and drag
Thy body to a grave in the abyss.
A cloud thickens the night.
Hark! how the tempest crashes through the forest!
The owls fly out in strange affright;
The columns of the evergreen palaces
Are split and shattered;
The roots creak, and stretch, and groan;
And ruinously overthrown,
The trunks are crushed and shattered
By the fierce blast's unconquerable stress.
Over each other crack and crash they all
In terrible and intertangled fall;
And through the ruins of the shaken mountain
The airs hiss and howl.
It is not the voice of the fountain,
Nor the wolf in his midnight prowl.
Dost thou not hear?
Strange accents are ringing

Aloft, afar, anear;
The witches are singing!
The torrent of a raging wizard song
Streams the whole mountain along.

Chorus of Witches
The stubble is yellow, the corn is green,
Now to the Brocken the witches go;
The mighty multitude here may be seen
Gathering, wizard and witch, below.
Sir Urian is sitting aloft in the air;
Hey over stock! and hey over stone!
'Twixt witches and incubi, what shall be done?
Tell it who dare! tell it who dare!

A Voice
Upon a sow-swine, whose farrows were nine,
Old Baubo rideth alone.

Chorus
Honour her, to whom honour is due,
Old mother Baubo, honour to you!
An able sow, with old Baubo upon her,
Is worthy of glory, and worthy of honour!
The legion of witches is coming behind,
Darkening the night, & outspeeding the wind...

A Voice
Which way comest thou!

A Voice
Over Ilsenstein;
The owl was awake in the white moonshine;
I saw her at rest in her downy nest,
And she stared at me with her broad, bright eyne.

Voices — And you may now as well take your course on to Hell,
Since you ride by so fast on the headlong blast.

A Voice — She dropt poison upon me as I passed.
Here are the wounds...

Chorus of Witches — Come away! come along!
The way is wide, the way is long,
But what is that for a Bedlam throng?
Stick with the prong, and scratch with the broom.
The child in the cradle lies strangled at home,
And the mother is clapping her hands....

Semi-chorus 1 of Wizards — We glide in
Like snails when the women are all away;
And from a house once given over to sin
Woman has a thousand steps to stray.

Semicho. 2 — A thousand steps must a woman take,
Where a man but a single spring will make.

Voices above — Come with us, come with us, from Felsensee.

Voices below — With what joy would we fly through the upper sky!
We are washed, we are 'nointed, stark naked are we;
But our toil and our pain are for ever in vain.

Both Choruses — The wind is still, the stars are fled,
The melancholy moon is dead;

The magic notes, like spark on spark,
Drizzle, whistling through the dark.
Come away!

Voices below — Stay, oh, stay!

Voices above — Out of the crannies of the rocks,
Who calls?

Voices below — Oh, let me join your flocks!
I three hundred years have striven
To catch your skirt and mount to Heaven, ...
And still in vain. Oh, might I be
With company akin to me!

Both Choruses — Some on a ram and some on a prong,
On poles and on broomsticks we flutter along;
Forlorn is the wight who can rise not to-night.

A Half-Witch below — I have been tripping this many an hour:
Are the others already so far before?
No quiet at home, and no peace abroad!
And less methinks is found by the road.

Chorus of Witches — Come onward, away! aroint thee, aroint!
A witch to be strong must anoint ... anoint ...
Then every trough will be boat enough;
With a rag for a sail we can sweep through the sky, ...
Who flies not to-night, when means he to fly?

Both Choruses
We cling to the skirt, & we strike on the ground;
Witch-legions thicken around and around;
Wizard-swarms cover the heath all over.
They descend.

Meph.
What thronging, dashing, raging, rustling;
What whispering, babbling, hissing, bustling;
What glimmering, spurting, stinking, burning,
As Heaven and Earth were overturning.
There is a true witch element about us;
Take hold on me, or we shall be divided:...
Where are you?

Faust (from a distance) Here!

Meph.
What!
I must exert my authority in the house.
Place for young Voland! pray make way, good people.
Take hold on me, doctor, and with one step
Let us escape from this unpleasant crowd.
They are too mad for people of my sort.
Just there shines a peculiar kind of light;
Something attracts me in those bushes. Come
This way; we shall slip down there in a minute.

Faust
Spirit of Contradiction! Well, lead on...
'Twere a wise feat indeed to wander out
Into the Brocken upon May-day night,
And then to isolate oneself in scorn,
Disgusted with the humours of the time.

Meph. See yonder, round a many-coloured flame
A merry club is huddled altogether:
Even with such little people as sit there
One would not be alone.

Faust Would that I were
Up yonder in the glow and whirling smoke,
Where the blind million rush impetuously
To meet the evil ones; there might I solve
Many a riddle that torments me!

Meph. Yet
Many a riddle there is tied anew
Inextricably. Let the great world rage!
We will stay here safe in the quiet dwellings.
'Tis an old custom. Men have ever built
Their own small world in the great world of all.
I see young witches naked there, and old ones
Wisely attired with greater decency.
Be guided now by me, and you shall buy
A pound of pleasure with a dram of trouble.
I hear them tune their instruments ... one must
Get used to this damned scraping. Come, I'll lead you
Among them; and what there you do and see,
As a fresh compact 'twixt us two shall be.
How say you now? this space is wide enough ...
Look forth, you cannot see the end of it ...
An hundred bonfires burn in rows, and they
Who throng around them seem innumerable:
Dancing and drinking, jabbering, making love,
And cooking, are at work. Now tell me, friend,

What is there better in the world than this?

Faust In introducing us, do you assume
The character of wizard or of devil?

Meph. In truth, I generally go about
In strict incognito; and yet one likes
To wear one's orders upon gala days.
I have no ribbon at my knee; but here
At home, the cloven foot is honourable.
See you that snail there? ... she comes creeping up,
And with her feeling eyes hath smelt out something,
I could not, if I would, mask myself here.
Come now, we'll go about from fire to fire:
I'll be the pimp, and you shall be the lover.

To some old Women, who are sitting round a heap of glimmering coals.

Old gentlewomen, what do you do out here?
You ought to be with the young rioters
Right in the thickest of the revelry ...
But every one is best content at home.

General Who dare confide in right or a just claim?
So much as I had done for them! and now ...
With women and the people 'tis the same,
Youth will stand foremost ever, ... age may go
To the dark grave unhonoured.

Minister Now-a-days
People assert their rights: they go too far;
But as for me, the good old times I praise;
Then we were all in all, 'twas something worth
One's while to be in place and wear a star;

That was indeed the golden age on earth.

Parvenu We too are active, and we did and do
What we ought not, perhaps; and yet we now
Will seize, whilst all things are whirled round
and round,
A spoke of Fortune's wheel, and keep our ground.

Author Who now can taste a treatise of deep sense
And ponderous volume? 'tis impertinence
To write what none will read, therefore will I
To please the young and thoughtless people try.

Meph. (who all at once appears to have grown very old)
I find the people ripe for the last day,
Since I last came up to the wizard mountain;
And as my little cask runs turbid now,
So is the world drained to the dregs.

Pedlar-Witch Look here,
Gentlemen; do not hurry on so fast
And lose the chance of a good pennyworth.
I have a pack full of the choicest wares
Of every sort, and yet in all my bundle
Is nothing like what may be found on earth;
Nothing that in a moment will make rich
Men and the world with fine malicious mischief.
There is no dagger drunk with blood; no bowl
From which consuming poison may be drained
By innocent and healthy lips; no jewel,
The price of an abandoned maiden's shame;
No sword which cuts the bond it cannot loose,
Or stabs the wearer's enemy in the back;
No...

Meph. Gossip, you know little of these times.
What has been, has been; what is done, is past.
They shape themselves into the innovations
They breed, and innovation drags us with it.
The torrent of the crowd sweeps over us:
You think to impel, and are yourself impelled.
Faust Who is that yonder?
Meph. Mark her well. It is
Lilith.
Faust Who?
Meph. Lilith, the first wife of Adam.
Beware of her fair hair, for she excels
All women in the magic of her locks;
And when she winds them round a young man's neck,
She will not ever set him free again.
Faust There sit a girl and an old woman ... they
Seem to be tired with pleasure and with play.
Meph. There is no rest to-night for any one:
When one dance ends another is begun;
Come, let us to it. We shall have rare fun.
Faust dances and sings with a Girl, and Mephistopheles with an old Woman.

Faust I had once a lovely dream
In which I saw an apple-tree,
Where two fair apples with their gleam
To climb and taste attracted me.

The Girl She with apples you desired

From Paradise came long ago;
With you I feel that, if required,
Such still within my garden grow.

. . . . . .

Procto-Phantasmist: What is this cursèd multitude about?
Have we not long since proved to demonstration
That ghosts move not on ordinary feet?
But these are dancing just like men and women.

The Girl: What does he want then at our ball?

Faust: Oh! he
Is far above us all in his conceit:
Whilst we enjoy, he reasons of enjoyment;
And any step which in our dance we tread,
If it be left out of his reckoning,
Is not to be considered as a step.
There are few things that scandalize him not:
And when you whirl round in the circle now,
As he went round the wheel in his old mill,
He says that you go wrong in all respects,
Especially if you congratulate him
Upon the strength of the resemblance.
Fly!

Procto-Phantasmist: Vanish! Unheard of impudence! What, still there!
In this enlightened age, too, since you have been
Proved not to exist!... But this infernal brood
Will hear no reason and endure no rule.
Are we so wise, and is the POND still haunted?
How long have I been sweeping out this rubbish
Of superstition, and the world will not

Come clean with all my pains!...it is a case
Unheard of!

The Girl — Then leave off teasing us so.

Procto-Phantasmist — I tell you, spirits, to your faces now,
That I should not regret this despotism
Of spirits, but that mine can wield it not.
To-night I shall make poor work of it,
Yet I will take a round with you, and hope
Before my last step in the living dance
To beat the poet and the devil together.

Meph. — At last he will sit down in some foul puddle;
That is his way of solacing himself;
Until some leech, diverted with his gravity,
Cures him of spirits and the spirit together.

To Faust, who has seceded from the dance.

Why do you let that fair girl pass from you,
Who sung so sweetly to you in the dance?

Faust — A red mouse in the middle of her singing
Sprang from her mouth.

Meph. — That was all right, my friend:
Be it enough that the mouse was not grey.
Do not disturb your hour of happiness
With close consideration of such trifles.

Faust — Then saw I...

Meph. — What?

Faust — Seest thou not a pale,
Fair girl, standing alone, far, far away?
She drags herself now forward with slow steps,
And seems as if she moved with shackled feet.
I cannot overcome the thought that she

Is like poor Margaret.

Meph. Let it be... pass on...
No good can come of it... it is not well
To meet it... it is an enchanted phantom,
A lifeless idol; with its numbing look,
It freezes up the blood of man; and they
Who meet its ghastly stare are turned to stone,
Like those who saw Medusa.

Faust Oh, too true!
Her eyes are like the eyes of a fresh corpse
Which no belovèd hand has closed, alas!
That is the breast which Margaret yielded to me...
Those are the lovely limbs which I enjoyed!

Meph. It is all magic, poor deluded fool!
She looks to every one like his first love.

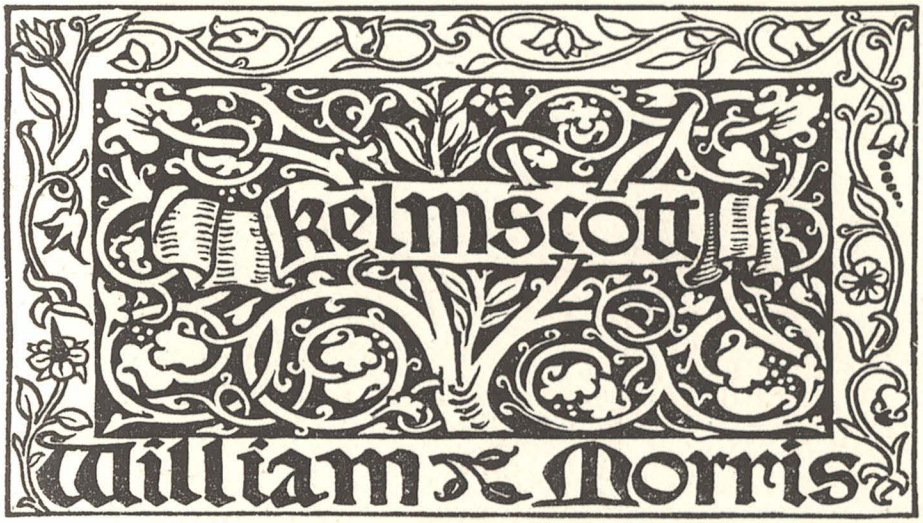
Faust Oh, what delight! what woe! I cannot turn
My looks from her sweet piteous countenance.
How strangely does a single blood-red line,
Not broader than the sharp edge of a knife,
Adorn her lovely neck!

Meph. Ay, she can carry
Her head under her arm upon occasion;
Perseus has cut it off for her. These pleasures
End in delusion.... Gain this rising ground,
It is as airy here as in a....
And if I am not mightily deceived,
I see a theatre.... What may this mean?

Attendant Quite a new piece, the last of seven, for 'tis
The custom now to represent that number.

'Tis written by a Dilettante, and
The actors who perform are Dilettanti;
Excuse me, gentlemen; but I must vanish.
I am a Dilettante curtain-lifter.

Overseen by F. S. Ellis after the text of foregoing Editions, & printed by me, William Morris, at the Kelmscott Press, Upper Mall, Hammersmith, and finished on the 21st day of August, 1895.



Sold by William Morris, at the Kelmscott Press.

TR 16984/40
H81.6K
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